THE FLOOD

NEW LIGHT ON AN OLD STORY

By HAROLD PEAKE

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BY

HAROLD PEAKE

M.A., F.S.A.

WITH A MAP AND 10 ILLUSTRATIONS

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CONTENTS

CHAP. PAGE

PREFACE ix

I. INTRODUCTION 1

II. VARIOUS STORIES OF A GREAT FLOOD . . 14

III. THE HEBREW VERSION 28

IV. SOME BABYLONIAN VERSIONS 36

V. THE ROYAL LISTS 50

VI. THE ARCHÆOLOGICAL EVIDENCE . . . 62

VII. THE INTERPRETATION OF THE EVIDENCE . . 75

VIII. RECENT DISCOVERIES AT UR 83

IX. THE LATEST DISCOVERIES 95

X. THE CAUSE OF THE FLOOD 113

BOOKS 117

INDEX 119

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

FIG. PAGE

1. Back of tablet with account of the flood . . . 40
2. Gilgamesh and Enkidu fighting the bull . . . 44
3. Map of Mesopotamia, showing the sites of the antediluvian cities 53
4. Pottery from Susa I 64
5. Pottery from Susa II 67
6. Pottery from Tell al-'Ubaid 69
7. Polychrome pots from Jemdet Nasr 72
8. Neolithic pot from Persia 74
9. Oannes 81
10. Section showing the deposits at Ur 99
11. Section showing the deposits at Kish 103

PREFACE

During the last generation or two a great change has come about in the views held in this country on the early books of the Old Testament. Whereas in the middle of the Nineteenth Century it was customary to teach that these books contained an exact historical account of the early ages of the world, today the vast majority of Ministers of religion and Teachers of scripture in our Schools endeavour to show that, while the religious and moral lessons are not of less value than was formerly believed, yet the historical matter is not to be accepted as an accurate account of what happened.

This change has been taking place gradually in our Churches and Schools, and the reforms in the teaching, though advocated for long, have not yet been fully effected. Thus there are many, not only among the old and middle-aged, who have been brought up to believe that the Flood covered the whole world and destroyed all living things, save those that escaped with Noah in his ark. Most of these, in spite of their early teaching, cherish doubts as to the truth of this belief, and are puzzled when they meet with the more modern view, since they have had no time or opportunity to examine the evidence on which this view has been based. The author hopes that this little volume will be helpful to such as these.

Less than a year ago the world was startled with the news that direct evidence of the Flood had been found at Ur of the Chaldees, and this news was followed by a claim that similar evidence had been discovered at Kish. In this volume the author has examined the evidence from both sites. On that from Ur he has received valuable assistance from Mr. Woolley, who has kindly permitted him to publish a section based on that which appeared in the *Antiquaries' Journal.* Professor Langdon has kindly given similar help about Kish, and has furnished, from M. Watelin's reports, materials for a section from that site, as well as photographs of the pottery found at Jemdet Nasr. To both of these gentlemen the author tenders his sincerest thanks.

He also wishes to thank Messrs. Sampson Low & Co. for permission to reproduce figs. 1, 2 and 9, the Delegates of the Clarendon Press for fig. 3, the Director of the British Museum for fig. 6, Professor Langdon for fig. 7, Professor Ernst Herzfeld and the Proprietors of the *Illustrated London News* for fig. 8, and Mr. Woolley and the Society of Antiquaries for fig. 10.

16*th December* 1929.

THE FLOOD

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

EVERYONE has heard of the story of the Flood, and most people have read, over and over again, the account of this disaster recounted in the Book of Genesis. We have been familiar with its outlines since the earliest days of our childhood, when it was brought home to us by the toy Noah's Ark, into which we conducted processions of animals, marching leisurely two by two. The essential features of the story are that, owing to the wickedness of mankind, God determined to destroy the human race, with the exception of Noah and his family. The patriarch was instructed to build an ark, capable of holding himself, his wife, his three sons with their wives, seven specimens of certain useful species of animals and two of all other kinds. Then came the Flood, which covered the whole earth and destroyed all living things save those in the ark. This event is said to have happened at a date which has been variously calculated at about 2000 or 3000 B.C., that is to say about 4000 or 5000 years ago.

The story is variously viewed by different people. Some still consider that it is an accurate account of an historic episode, and among these are those who believe that the version given in the Book of Genesis was divinely dictated to Moses, or whoever was the author of that book. Some, I think, even believe that the Authorised Version of the English translation has an equally authoritative value. On the other hand there are those who believe that the story has no basis in fact, that it is an imaginative work, like a fairy story, that it is, in fact, a myth.

The two extreme views, described in the last paragraph, may be termed the literal and the mythical views; there is a third, which has been growing in importance since the beginning of this century, which I will call the legendary view. Those who hold this view believe that there was a flood that gave rise to the story, but that it was not universal and that it took place earlier than the supporters of the literal view suppose. They believe that the story, that has come down to us, is not an accurate account of this disaster, but that many details have suffered change during its transmission, while several features of a mythical character have been incorporated.

Besides those who hold these three types of views, the literal, the legendary and the mythical, there are a large number of people whose opinions on the subject may be considered as being in a fluid condition. They are no longer prepared to accept the literal view, to which they were in many cases brought up, they cannot conceive of a flood enveloping the whole world and covering the highest mountains, nor can they believe that all the varieties of life, human and animal, have descended during a period of 4000 or 5000 years from the limited occupants of a primitive boat or ark. They have, however, had no opportunity to study or desire to investigate the problem, and their opinions remain in a state of uncertainty. It is to these, a very large section of the reading public, and nearly all folk belong to the reading public today, that these pages are primarily addressed, that they may be enabled to judge for themselves and to form their own opinions on the question, after considering the arguments advanced in favour of some of these different explanations.

We shall better be able to appreciate the changing views that have been held on the Book of Genesis and the story of the Flood, if we first examine the varied opinions that have been expressed on the poems of Homer and the body of Greek mythology. The works of Homer, like the Vedic books of the Aryans in India, were handed down orally for some centuries, and the accuracy of the text was preserved by a school of qualified reciters known as Rhapsodists. About the year 550 B.C. the first text was written down by the orders of Pisistratus, then tyrant or autocratic ruler of Athens. There was also a great body of stories, both myths and legends, current among the people of Greece, many of which formed the basis of the plays of the Greek dramatists, especially of Æschylus, Sophocles and Euripides. References to many of these stories, or to the people mentioned in them, occur in the poems of Homer, Hesiod and Pindar, while many of the events described are depicted on black-figured Attic vases, dating from the sixth century B.C. For full accounts, however, of some of these stories, like that of the Argonauts, we are dependent upon later Greek writers, who lived during the centuries that followed the time of Alexander the Great. We may feel confident, however, that these stories, if not all the details contained in them, are much older, and had been handed down orally from very early times as folk-tales.

The Greek world held the works of Homer in peculiar sanctity, and all criticism of the subject matter was forbidden by public opinion. The same seems to have held good, in a minor degree, for the general body of folk-tales during the fifth century B.C., though we seem to notice the spirit of criticism appearing in the plays of Euripides, and still more in those of Aristophanes. In the fourth century the advanced thinkers were becoming frankly sceptical, though somewhat afraid of making open statements, for fear of offending popular opinion. Socrates, however, threw down a direct challenge, and was compelled to pay for his temerity with his life. During the later or Hellenistic Age criticism was less marked, and there was a tendency to treat all such stories as sober history, to weave them into consecutive narratives, and thus to thrust back Greek origins into a remoter past. About 300 B.C. Euhemerus started the idea that all the gods and heroes had been kings in earlier days, so that all mythological stories became considered by his followers as legends.

The Roman world accepted the mass of Greek folk-tales *en bloc*, and there was little disposition to criticise them during the early centuries of the Empire. Later, however, more attention was paid to such matters, and Lucian, who wrote in the latter half of the second century of our era, advanced very modern views, while in Alexandria the Neo-Platonist school of philosophers even ventured to treat as allegories the stories related by Homer.

Then learning and civilisation were swept away by the inroads of barbarians from the forests of the North and the steppes and deserts of the South and East. Learning in the West survived only at Constantinople, the territory belonging to which was being progressively diminished, while a second centre was founded by the Jews, who had found a safe asylum among the Moors in Spain, whither they had carried some of the results of Greek scholarship. The rest of Europe lay under a dark cloud of ignorance for a thousand years, for during much of that time no one could read or write save the Christian priests or clerics, while the only books available were the Bible, some of the works of the Early Fathers, and a few of the classical authors, notably Vergil. Ignorance and barbarity were followed by belief in the grossest superstitions, pagan and Christian. During these Dark Ages the great body of Greek mythology was unknown throughout Europe, and the stories of the poet Vergil, read by the clerics alone, seem to have been accepted as actual history, though they were admittedly pure fiction, based on elements from Greek and Italian folk-tales.

Light first dawned on Europe from Spain, by means of the foundation by the Moors in the ninth century of a Medical School at Salerno in South Italy. This developed into a University about A.D. 1150 and received a new constitution from the Emperor Frederick II in 1231. Thence the new civilisation spread up Italy to France and soon penetrated all parts of Europe except the north-eastern section. This spread of learning, the First Renaissance, brought few works of Greek origin except those of Aristotle, which came as an Arabic translation, soon afterwards rendered into Latin. This resulted in laying the foundation of scientific research, but for a time science was much mingled with superstition, and besides Algebra and Geometry the chief subjects studied were

Alchemy and Astrology. Little of the Greek literature containing the folk-tales was then brought to the West, and the subject received no special attention.

It was the fall of Constantinople at the hands of the Ottoman Turks in A.D. 1453 that brought such literature to the rest of Europe. Large numbers of Greek scholars, driven by the Turks from Constantinople and the Greek cities of Asia Minor, fled to Italy, carrying with them precious manuscripts of ancient Greek authors. These were studied with avidity by the Italians, who had been prepared for such learning by the universities that had followed in the wake of Salerno, and by A.D. 1500 the Renaissance was in full swing. The knowledge of Greek spread rapidly to France, and in A.D. 1510 Erasmus, a fore-runner of the Protestant Reformation, visited England, and persuaded the University of Cambridge to initiate the study of Greek ; he had as much difficulty in convincing the authorities there of the advisability of instituting examinations in this language as others have had recently in inducing them to abandon them in the case of students of other subjects.

Towards the close of the sixteenth century the educated world in Europe became steeped in Greek tradition and familiar with the substance of Greek mythology. For the most part these tales were thought of as beautiful stories, but there was a tendency to accept the views of the Euhemerists, and to believe that all such stories, even the most fanciful and impossible, had had a considerable foundation in fact. This view gained ground during the next two centuries, and was at its high water mark when Lempriere first published his Classical Dictionary in A.D. 1788.

Then came a turn in the tide. The educated world had grown more critical, and these stories ceased to be taken at their face value. In A.D. 1795 Wolf published his famous *Prolegomena*, attacking the authenticity of Homer, and even denying the poet's existence. All Greek folk-tales were hurriedly relegated to the realm of mythology, even the Tale of Troy, and the learned were busy inventing explanations.

The favourite interpretation was that these stories were nature-myths, that they told of the movements of the sun, the moon, the stars, the lightning, the storm and the clouds. The Chthonic Myth described the death of plant life in the winter and its resurrection in the spring, while the Zodiacal Myth referred to the passage of the sun through the twelve signs of the Zodiac. Besides these there were myths offering explanations of unusual features in the landscape, and myths, founded on erroneous etymology, to account for the names of places.

Of the nature-myth explanations, that of the Sun-myth had the greatest vogue and ran riot for half a century or more, offering explanations of every story, almost of every historical event. Some other explanations had a longer life, and the method was extended by Miss Jane Harrison to show that myths had arisen to explain rites and ceremonies, the origin of which had been lost in antiquity. More recently, especially in Central Europe, it has become fashionable among a certain set to explain these stories as the result of a Freudian psychological complex acting upon the national consciousness.

It must not be imagined, however, that these explanations are wholly without foundation. Some stories are doubtless Sun-myths, the tale of Dis and Persephone, of

Ishtar and Tammuz, seem to be Chthonic ; we shall refer in a later chapter to stories of a Great Flood that seem to have arisen to explain certain geological features. The eytmological myth is not uncommon, and a fairly recent case occurs in this country. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle states that in A.D. 534 Stuff and Wihtgar invaded the Isle of Wight, and that in A.D. 544 "Wiht-gar died and they buried him in Wiht-gara-byrg," now known as Carisbrooke. But Wiht-gara-byrg means the fortress of the Wiht-gara, or the inhabitants of Wiht or Wight. When the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle was compiled the meaning of this term had become obscure, Wihtgar was thought of as a personal name, and an invasion of the island by him was postulated to account for the name of the chief place in the island. Miss Harrison is doubtless right in believing that similar myths have arisen to explain the origin of rites and ceremonies, though, whether these are as common as she supposed, has been questioned. Whether there is a national consciousness, capable of suffering from a Freudian complex, I must leave to psychologists to determine.

Such was the position at the opening of the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Then in A.D. 1873 Schliemann, the German archæologist, began to dig on the site of Troy, and afterwards in A.D. 1876 at Mycenæ and later in A.D. 1880 at Orchomenos. On the 16th of November 1876 he was able to telegraph to the King of the Hellenes that he had found the tomb of Agamemnon, the King of Mycenæ, who led the Achæan forces against Troy. His discoveries were received with ridicule by the scholars of his day, for was not the Tale of Troy a myth, and Achilles, the hero of the story, a personification of the sun! Little by little Schliemann's views gained acceptance, and the more scientific excavations, carried out after his death by his lieutenant Dörpfeld, established before the world the civilisation of Mycenæan Greece and the reality of the Homeric heroes. It was just at the beginning of the present century that Sir Arthur Evans started work at Knossos, the home of Minos, a personage belonging to an earlier cycle than the Homeric heroes. Here he found evidence of successive layers of culture, and he has been able to carry back the story of Greek civilisation, including many a contact with Egypt, to a time well before 3000 B.C.

Today no one doubts that the Trojan war was a reality, that Minos and many another hero of Greek story lived and acted much as the stories relate. After half a century of excavation the Archæologist has demonstrated to the historian and the mythologist the reality of these legendary persons, and recently what is believed to be the name of Atreus, the father of Agamemnon, who led the Achæan forces against Troy, in the form of Attarissijas, has been found on a Hittite tablet brought back by Hrozny from the heart of Asia Minor. Thus these stories are not myths but legends, these people existed, though some may have been known by other appellations, and Minos, like Pharaoh, may be a title rather than a personal name. The acts ascribed to these people must also have had some foundation in fact, though the magnitude of their deeds has doubtless grown in the telling, as such deeds are apt to do even in fishing exploits or snake stories. Mythical incidents, from the common stock, have entered into some of these tales, especially into that of Perseus, in which many of the items are such as are found in other stories, told elsewhere in Greece and in other lands, in both later and earlier times.

In the light of what has been said of Greek legend, let us examine the views that have been held about the Flood story at different times since it was first committed to writing. Opinions differ somewhat as to the date of the first written version of the Book of Genesis, but all recent commentators agree that it cannot go back as far as 1000 B.C., while it is clearly of composite origin and has been revised considerably on more than one occasion. To this subject we shall return in a later chapter. Here it need only be said that it is clear that the Jews, under the kings and during the captivity, were not under the impression that it was verbally inspired, else they would not have dared so freely to tamper with the text. After the return to Jerusalem under Ezra and Nehemiah about 550 B.C. the text seems to have remained unaltered, and it is to this and to subsequent times that we must attribute the growth of the idea of the sacred nature of the text, but whether a belief in its verbal inspiration was universal among the Jews during these centuries is far from clear. It seems more probable that this doctrine is of very modern growth, and has only developed in northern lands since the Reformation and the translation of the Scriptures into the vulgar tongue.

The Books of the Old Testament, now gathered together into a Canon, were accepted by the early Christians. There were few scholars among these, for the new religion made its appeal chiefly to the poor and uneducated. It is unlikely, therefore, that during the first few centuries of struggle and persecution much thought was given to the historical value to be placed upon the

Book of Genesis. After the time of the Emperor Constantine the majority of the Roman citizens, educated and uneducated alike, joined the new faith, and we find some expressions of opinion on such points during the succeeding centuries. St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo from A.D. 395 to 430, seems to have viewed the early chapters, at least, of this book in a critical sense, for he states that the names of the descendants of Noah, given in Chapter X, refer to nations and not to men. Such views were doubtless held by the majority of educated Christians during the declining years of the Roman Empire.

Then after the downfall of the Western Empire, following the pillage of Rome by the Visigoths under Alaric in A.D. 410, came the long period of darkness, ignorance and superstition, when the Bible, being still only known in the Vulgate version, the Latin translation made by St. Jerome, was a sealed book to the mass of the people, unable as they were to read, and ignorant as they were, in most cases, of the Latin tongue. In the fifteenth century came the Renaissance and with it the foundation of many grammar schools, so that education began to spread. This was followed by a desire to read the Bible, and translations were made into the language of the people, known as the "vulgar tongue," which were at first sternly suppressed. Lastly came the Reformation in North Europe, the translation of the Bible and a freedom of thought and inquiry hitherto suppressed by the Ecclesiastical powers and the Holy Office of the Inquisition.

The effect of the Reformation and easy access to the Bible was to stimulate religious thought, but for a long time this did not take a critical turn. Since the tradition of the Church and priestly authority had given way to scriptural authority, the Bible became the sheet anchor of the reformed faith, and its absolute veracity became unimpeachable. Thus the doctrine of its inspiration became emphasised, and among the less educated became a question of verbal inspiration, and many of the uneducated acted as though they considered that this verbal inspiration applied to the English text of the Authorised Version. This attitude was on a par with that adopted in the case of the Greek folk-tales, and received unanimous adherence for more than two centuries.

During the eighteenth century there were rumbles of dissent, raised by the encyclopædists, who were engaged in sifting everything to its foundations. Little change, however, appeared in the beliefs of the general public until the early years of the nineteenth century. Then the students of Geology, a science lately arisen, raised doubts as to the seven days of Creation, but the then Dean of Westminister, Dr. Buckland, was a geologist, and smoothed the way for this change in belief, though he was a firm believer in the literal interpretation of the Flood story, on which he composed one of the Bridgewater Treatises.

Later in the century the Mythological school got to work on the Flood story along with the others, with what success I must leave to a later chapter to describe. Then came the Archæologists and excavators, beginning with Layard, and followed by a host of others, whose work, up to the recent remarkable discoveries of Woolley, will take more than one chapter to describe.

If we are to judge from the parallel of Greek folk-tales, we may expect that the literal interpretation will have to give way to another, and what that should be it is the object of the following chapters to elucidate. The problems before us are : Was there a Great Flood and was it universal? Is there everywhere a record of this flood and do these records agree? If there was a flood, when did it take place and what was its cause?

CHAPTER II

VARIOUS STORIES OF A GREAT FLOOD

IT has often been stated that the story of the Flood or universal deluge has been handed down among all the peoples of the world, and this has been cited as evidence both for its authenticity and for its universal nature. We must, therefore, examine the truth of this statement.

Many learned men have compiled lists of these stories. Among the best known of these we may mention the Germans, R. Andree, H. Usener, E. Böklen, G. Gerland and, at a much earlier date, Philipp Buttman. Besides these there were the Austrian, M. Winternitz and the French savant François Lenormant, while among our own countrymen Sir Henry Howarth wrote *The Mammoth and the Flood*, while Huxley dealt with the subject in an essay entitled *Hasisadra's Adventure*. The latest, and by far the fullest, list is, however, that given by Sir James Frazer in his *Folklore in the Old Testament*, which is an expansion of his Huxley Memorial Lecture delivered in 1916 before the Royal Anthropological Institute.

The conclusion arrived at by Frazer was that stories of a great flood were widely dispersed throughout Asia, the Pacific islands and both continents of America, but that they were rare in Europe and still rarer on the African continent.

Let us first examine the continent of Europe, remembering, however, that its people have long been Christian, and that, except for the Greeks and Romans, they had no written literature before the introduction of Christianity, when the Hebrew story became current among them. Various pagan traditions have, nevertheless, been handed down by word of mouth, and have subsequently been written and published, yet among these are very few references to a great flood.

In Iceland there was an old story, written down by Snorri Sturluson about A.D. 1222, which relates that Odin, Wili and We, three divine sons of the god Bor, slew the giant Ymir, from whose wounds gushed a stream of blood that drowned all the giants but one, Bergelmir, who escaped with his wife in a boat. After that the sons of Bor fashioned the world out of the carcass of Ymir. Except for the escape of two individuals in a boat, the story bears no resemblance to that of Noah's deluge, and the fact, that it is said to have occurred before the creation of the world, shows that it belongs to a different category of folk-tales.

An early Welsh legend states that once the lake of Llion burst, flooding all the lands so that everyone was drowned except Dwyfan and Dwyfach, who escaped, with a pair of every kind of living thing, so that the descendants of this couple repeopled the island of Prydain (Britain), while the world was restocked with animals derived from those that they had saved. This account more nearly resembles that in the Book of Genesis, and does not occur before Christian times, so that, as Sir John Rhys has pointed out, it was clearly derived from a scriptural source.

A Lithuanian story is very similar, and, according to

Usener, its genuineness is not above suspicion. According to this, Pramzimas, the supreme deity, looked out of the window of heaven and observed the wickedness of mankind, so he determined to destroy them. He sent two giants, Wandu and Wejas, that is to say Water and Wind, to execute his orders, and after twenty days only a remnant of mankind were left upon the top of a high mountain. Pramzimas looked out again and noticed this. He was eating nuts at the time, and by accident he let fall a nut-shell which dropped upon the mountain. Into this everyone climbed, and thus were saved. Only a single old couple remained on the spot, and they were naturally disturbed by the catastrophe. So the god sent them a rainbow to comfort them, and told them to jump nine times over the bones of the earth. This they did, and nine fresh couples sprang up, to become the ancestors of the nine tribes of the Lithuanians. If this is a genuine story, which seems doubtful, it has unquestionably derived some of its elements from the biblical account in early Christian times, while other features seem to be derived from the Greek story that will be related lower down.

The gipsies of Transylvania say that at one time all the people in the world lived happily and deaths did not occur. One day, however, an old man arrived and was well entertained by an aged couple. On taking his leave he gave his host a little fish, saying that he would be back in nine days, and, if he received the fish back safely, his host would be well rewarded. The wife, a prudent housekeeper, desired the fish for their supper, but her husband refused to betray his trust. At length, however, in his absence she began to cook the fish, when with a loud clap of thunder a storm arose and the rivers overflowed. On the ninth day the owner of the fish returned and bade his host take another wife and build a boat to save himself and his new bride from the destruction that was to overwhelm mankind. This he did, and into the boat he took his wife and kinsfolk, a number of animals and the seeds of trees and herbs. Then it rained for a whole year, and the occupants of the boat were the only survivors. This seems to be a composite legend, with some details derived from scriptural sources after the introduction of Christianity, but the main features, especially the episode of the fish, brought from India, where, as we shall see, a similar legend occurs.

The Voguls, a Finnish people living on both sides of the Ural mountains, relate that after seven years of drought two giants, the Great Man and the Great Woman, realising that it had rained elsewhere, determined to save themselves and their neighbours from the flood that they anticipated. They warned them all to make boats of hollow poplar trees, and to anchor them to earth with ropes of willow roots five hundred fathoms long, and to take with them a supply of liquid butter wherewith to grease the ropes. Some did as they were advised, while others neglected the warning altogether, or failed to anchor their boats securely, or to provide a rope of sufficient length. Then came the flood, when those who had strictly obeyed the instructions of the Giants were saved, while the others perished. Since all animals and plants had perished, the survivors prayed to their god Numi-tarom to create for them a fresh supply, which he did.

In Savoy there are in several places huge iron or bronze rings, fixed high on inaccessible rocks. Local tradition asserts that to these the inhabitants of the land, who were the lucky owners of boats, attached their craft and thus escaped drowning when the lower lands were flooded.

All of the above tales are of relatively modern date, and few if any of them can be proved to have existed in their present form before the introduction of Christianity brought in the biblical account of Noah and his flood. Latin literature, voluminous as it is, is silent on the subject of a Great Flood in Italy, and the only other story of the kind comes from Greek sources.

The chief Greek story of a flood was written about the middle of the second century B.C. by Apollodorus, but references to the same tale were made by Hellenicus, who wrote in the fifth century B.C., and by Pindar in the sixth. The story is, therefore, of respectable antiquity and may well go back to a remote age. According to Apollodorus, Deucalion was the son of Prometheus and was king of the country about Phthia in Thessaly. He married Pyrrha, the daughter of Epimetheus and Pandora, the first woman fashioned by the gods. When Zeus wished to destroy the men of the Bronze Age, Deucalion, acting on the advice of Prometheus, built a chest or ark, which he entered with his wife. Zeus then poured down rain on the whole of Greece, destroying all mankind except a few that fled to the mountains. Then the mountains of Thessaly were parted and all the world beyond the Isthmus of Corinth was overwhelmed. Deucalion floated over the sea for nine days, when his chest grounded on Parnassus; then, the rains having ceased, he disembarked and sacrificed to Zeus. Having been asked by Hermes what he wished, he chose men, and at the bidding of Zeus picked up stones and threw them over his head. These stones became men, while those thrown by Pyrrha became women.

Various places in Greece and some elsewhere in neighbouring countries, claimed to be the site of Deucalion's flood, or to have been in some way associated with the story, but the earliest accounts agree in placing the catastrophe on the Thessalian Plain. Now this is a large level plain surrounded by mountains, and is drained by the river Peneus, which finds its way to the sea through the deep gorge of Tempe, cleft, it would seem, by an earthquake in the distant past.

It is the view of Sir James Frazer, and most people are in agreement with him, that this plain, looking as it does like the bed of a large lake, as indeed it must once have been, suggested to its inhabitants the idea of Deucalion's flood. Thus the story arose to account for a geological feature, a well-attested source for a number of myths. In this it differs completely from the Hebrew account, which, as we shall see later, is clearly a legend. Two other stories of floods are related in Greece, one of an inundation of Lake Copais, which had once been of greater extent, but had been partially drained in prehistoric times by the people of Orchomenos. A similar tale was told in Arcadia and was associated with the name of Dardanus, a mythical king of that land.

We must now turn to Africa. Egypt is the only country in that continent that has an ancient literature, though we have fairly early accounts of other parts of the northern coast from Roman writers and a few statements by Herodotus. For the stories current in other parts we are dependent on the accounts of travellers, anthropologists and missionaries. It is from the last mentioned source that we have received the greater number of the few stories that have been reported. A story, which is said to differ in many important features from the Hebrew version, is reported from Northern Guinea, but, as no details have been given, it is impossible to discuss it. Another version comes from the Lower Congo, in which it is related that the Sun and Moon met one day, when the Sun plastered mud on the face of its satellite, covering up some of its light. Then there was a flood and the inhabitants put their porridge sticks to their backs and became monkeys, the present population being descendants of newly created people. Another version states that the men became monkeys and the women lizards. The Bapedi, a Basuto tribe in South Africa, are said to have a legend of a great flood that destroyed the majority of mankind, but further inquiry showed that the story could be traced to a missionary source. Similar stories, likewise borrowed from Christian sources, have been reported by German missionaries from various parts of East Africa.

Sir James Frazer states on the authority of Sir Flinders Petrie that no story of a great flood has been discovered in the literature of Egypt, which is remarkable since the annual flooding of the river has been a regular, though beneficent, feature since people first settled in the valley of the Nile. Professor Elliot Smith, however, states that there is a story, which is not only related to that of the Noachian deluge, but is the source from which it sprang. This is a story, entitled *The Destruction of Mankind*, the earliest version of which that we possess was written down in the time of Seti I, about 1300 B.C., but which is believed to have been handed down from a much earlier date—from before 3300 B.C. according to Elliot Smith.

According to this tale, when Re, the sun-god, grew old, mankind, begotten of his eye, rebelled against him. After consulting a council of the gods he instructed the goddess Sekhmet, another name for Hathor, to destroy all human inhabitants. This she proceeded to do, when Re became alarmed and determined to save a remnant of mankind. He therefore gave Sekhmet a substance to grind up in a mortar, and told her to mix it with barley beer. This she did, preparing a quantity of blood-coloured beer, with which she filled 7000 jars. During the night this was poured out upon the fields, so that when Sekhmet started to resume her slaughter in the morning, she found the fields flooded. She saw her face mirrored in these red waters, then drank of them and became so intoxicated that she failed to recognise mankind. Re thus saved a remnant of the people from the wrath of Hathor, and, weary of life on earth, withdrew to heaven upon the back of the divine cow.

There is little resemblance between this story and the Hebrew account of the Flood; two points only have they in common, the wickedness or rebellious nature of mankind, and the divine destruction of the majority of them. It is, of course, arguable that such simple ideas may have occurred on more than one occasion to early man, though this solution would not, in all probability, be admitted by Elliot Smith. Alternatively it might be argued that the Hebrews picked up this idea during their bondage in Egypt, or that the notion was brought into Egypt from Asia on one of the several occasions on which intruders seem to have arrived from that continent before 3300 B.C.

We will leave for discussion in a later chapter the Flood stories current in Babylonia and among the Hebrews, but we must turn our attention to other similar stories related farther east in Asia. The Chinese relate that in Eastern Tartary there are neither brooks nor ponds, yet sand, oyster shells and the shields of crabs are found there in spite of its distance from the sea. The Mongol inhabitants of the district have, so the Chinese relate, a tradition that a great flood once covered this district. That large areas in this part of the world were covered by water, which has retreated to its present limited areas by a process of desiccation, has been amply proved by Sir Aurel Stein, and the tradition of the flood may go back to the time of this great extension of the waters, or, like the story of Deucalion, be a myth told to account for the vestiges of this ancient inland sea.

The great flood in China, recounted in the Shu King, seems to have been a historical event, which took place about 2200 B.C., and was only one of a number of similar floods that have occurred since in the valley of the Hoang Ho, rightly called China's peril.

Tales of Great Floods occur among the Kamchadales, and among a number of the peoples in the Malay peninsula. Each of these stories has its own special features, and all seem to refer to local floods that actually happened a long time ago. On the other hand the tale told by the Lolos, an aboriginal people living in the mountains of Yunnan in South-west China, bears such a close resemblance in many particulars to the Hebrew version, that it is usually believed that these people received the story from some Nestorian missionaries, who visited the country, and were still resident there when Marco Polo visited China in the thirteenth century.

We must now turn to what are claimed to be Flood stories, related in the sacred books of the Parsees, the modern representatives of the ancient Persians. One of these occurs in the *Bundahis*, a Pahlavi work on cosmogony, which relates that the angel Tistar was waging war with the spirit of evil at the beginning of the world. When the sun was in the sign of Cancer the angel became successively a man, a horse and a bull, and in each form produced rain for ten days. At the end of thirty days the water stood all over the earth as deep as the height of a man, and all noxious creatures, the offspring of the evil spirit, were drowned, and their venom made the water salt as is the sea today. This story says nothing of the destruction of mankind, who had not yet appeared upon the earth; it is clearly a cosmogonic myth, intended to account for the saltness of the sea.

The other story, which is older, appears in the Zend-Avesta, the most sacred book of the Zoroastrians or Parsees. It records that Yima, the first man, ruled over a perfectly happy world, in which there was neither disease nor death. Men and animals multiplied so exceedingly that on two occasions, at intervals of three hundred years, Ahura-Mazda, the supreme deity, increased the size of the world to give them room. Then he warned Yima that he would produce a catastrophe to thin their numbers, and told him to make a great park to enclose him, with his family and a number of useful animals. Then he sent a great spell of cold weather, with frost and snow, so that multitudes perished, and only those in Yima's enclosure survived. In this story there is no mention of a flood, and it appears to be a myth to account for the fact that men and animals had not multiplied to unwieldy proportions, though of late some scholars have suspected that it is in reality a legend, enshrining some distant memory of an Ice Age.

While no story of a Great Flood occurs in the Rig-Veda, the oldest set of books of the Aryan Indians, there is a definite flood story in the later Sanskrit literature. The story first appears in the *Satapatha Brahmana*, a treatise on ritual composed just before the rise of Buddhism in the sixth century before our era, when the Aryans were occupying the upper part of the Ganges valley as well as the basin of the Indus. The story runs as follows:

While Manu was washing one morning, a fish came into his hands and said to him, "Rear me, I will save thee." "From what wilt thou save me?" asked Manu. "A flood will carry away all these creatures," replied the fish, "from that I will save thee." Manu reared the fish, according to the directions given to him by that creature, and eventually placed it in the sea. Then he prepared a ship, which he entered when the flood began. The fish then swam up to him and to its horn Manu attached a rope, by which the fish towed the ship to a northern mountain, where on the instructions of the fish he tethered it to a tree, and landed. Thus was Manu saved when all else perished.

We meet with another version of the same story in the *Mahabharata*, an epic poem completed in its present form by 500 B.C., and the same story is repeated more than once in the Sanskrit *Puranas*, which are thought to date from about A.D. 320. Very similar stories are current in various parts of India today. The Bhils, a jungle tribe of Central India, tell a similar tale, in which the fish appears as the important character, and we have seen that a story of the same type was carried by the gipsies into Transylvania.

This story can hardly be of Aryan origin, for it does not occur, as we have seen, in the earliest religious books of this people, nor in those of the closely allied Persians. Also, if it had been Aryan, it is doubtful whether the Bhils would have learned it. It seems to have been a myth of some pre-Aryan inhabitants of India, and there would be nothing surprising if it contained elements of the Babylonian story, since, as Sir John Marshall has recently shown us, there was early intercourse between the cities of Mesopotamia and those that he has recently uncovered at Mohenjo-daro and Harappa in the Indus basin. Nevertheless, as we shall see more clearly when we come to examine the Babylonian evidence, the two stories have nothing in common but the occurrence of a great flood, and it is believed that the Indian series is a myth to account for the existence of the sea.

Other flood stories have been found in India. That told by the Kamars, a Dravidian tribe of the Raipur District in the Central Provinces, tells of an old couple saved with their children from a flood by taking refuge in a hollow piece of wood. In due course two birds were sent to find out whether the jackals had perished, and on hearing a favourable report God brought the flood to an end. The occurrence of the two birds reminds us of the raven and the dove, which occur not only in the Hebrew but in the Babylonian version. These details may have been carried from the Persian Gulf to the Indus basin in early days, as has been hinted, above, but it is generally believed that they are due to recent missionary influence.

The Hos or Larka Kols, in Bengal, have a story of the destruction of all mankind, save sixteen persons, by water or by fire, while the Santals, in the same province, believe that the visitation was by fire. Stories of a flood, however, occur among the Lepchas of Sikkim, in Tibet, among the Singphos and the Ahons of Assam, but these bear little resemblance to the Hebrew version, while a story of a local flood in Kashmir suggests that it was a myth similar to that related of Thessaly.

From South-eastern Asia come a number of flood stories. According to the Karens of Burma, two brothers escaped from a flood on a raft, while the Bahnars in Cochin China believe that a brother and sister likewise escaped with a number of animals in a chest. A similar story is told by the Bannavs, who live on the borders of Cambodia. A number of flood stories, with strange details, are told in the Malay peninsula, while others, differing in many features, are related in the islands of the East Indian archipelago.

It would be tedious to give a full account of all these flood stories, each of which has its own special features, usually suitable to the locality, while sometimes a number of details are common to a group in the same region. Such stories are told in many of the islands of the Pacific, especially among the Polynesians and the peoples of Micronesia. This is scarcely to be wondered at, considering the frequency with which small islands have been swept by the sea during typhoons. None of these, however, bear any close resemblance to the story of Noah.

On both American continents such stories are to be found in numbers, all clearly derived from some local catastrophe, such as that which lately left the lower valley of the Mississippi one vast inland sea. Floods occur in almost all regions and from time to time have devastating effects, from which some lucky individuals escape in an almost miraculous manner. That such stories are handed down among the survivors need cause us no surprise, though in the course of many generations these tales are apt to become adorned with mythical features, and are often ascribed to the anger of the gods.

Those who wish to learn more of the details of these numerous stories, which it is neither possible nor expedient to give in full in these pages, should consult the fourth chapter of Sir James Frazer's work, *Folklore in the Old Testament*, where they will find every story related at length and treated in a most masterly fashion. Most readers will agree with him that, while a few of the stories, such as the Greek and Mongolian, and that told in Kashmir, are myths related to explain the natural features of the landscape, the great majority are legends, relating to some great catastrophe that has happened to the people in long past ages, albeit they have usually attracted a number of mythical details, which have been added to explain the cause and significance of the event. One thing appears clear, namely that none of these bear any but quite accidental resemblance to the Hebrew story, except that recorded in Mesopotamia. These two stand apart from the others in many significant details, and, as we shall see in subsequent chapters, both relate to the same event, which can now be shown to have a strictly historical basis.

CHAPTER III

THE HEBREW VERSION

THE Hebrew account of the Deluge has come down to us in the Book of Genesis, from Chapter VI, verse 5, to Chapter IX, verse 17, traditionally believed to be one of the books written by Moses. Modern critics, however, are unanimous in telling us that the Hexateuch, as the first six books of the Old Testament are called, is made up from four distinct sources, of very different dates. Of these, two have been drawn on for the account of the Flood, and these have been ingeniously combined. Nevertheless they are of very different styles, and in some details these two versions contradict one another.

These two documents, from which the Deluge story has been compiled, are known to the critics as the Jehovistic or Jahvistic Document and the Priestly Document or Code. The former is by some centuries the older of the two, and was written during the existence of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, that is to say after the division of the land on the death of Solomon but before either of the component peoples had been taken captive to Babylon. The Jehovistic account is simple and poetical, and relates the main features of the story without elaboration. As Frazer points out it sees no impropriety in Noah, a layman, offering a sacrifice to Jehovah, in some place other than Jerusalem, and it has been conjectured that it was written some time prior to the year 621 B.C., when King Josiah enunciated and enforced a decree that no one was to offer sacrifice except at Jerusalem. We may consider, therefore, that this account was written, substantially as it has come down to us, at some date between 900 and 700 B.C. The Jehovistic portions of the account given in the Book of Genesis have thus been rendered in the Revised Version of the Old Testament.

"And the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the ground; both man and beast, and creeping thing, and fowl of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord." . . .

"And the Lord said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation. Of every clean beast shalt thou take to thee seven and seven, the male and his female; and of the beasts that are not clean two, the male and his female; of the fowl also of the air, seven and seven . . .; to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth. For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living thing that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the ground. And Noah did according unto all that the Lord commanded him. . . . And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him, into the ark, because of the waters of the flood. Of clean beasts, and of beasts that are not clean, and of fowls, and of every thing that creepeth upon the ground, there went in . . . unto Noah into the ark, . . . as . . . commanded Noah. And it came to pass after the seven days, that the waters of the flood were upon the earth. . . . And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights . . . and the Lord shut him in . . . and the waters increased, and bare up the ark, and it was lift up above the earth . . . all in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, of all that was in the dry land, died. And every living thing was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and creeping thing, and fowl of the heaven ; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only was left, and they that were with him in the ark . . . and the rain from heaven was restrained; and the waters returned from off the earth continually: . . .

" And it came to pass after the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made: and he sent forth a raven, and it went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth. And he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground; but the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him to the ark, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth; and he put forth his hand, and took her, and brought her in unto him in the ark. And he stayed yet another seven days; and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark; and the dove came in unto him at eventide; and, lo, in her mouth an olive leaf pluckt off; so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth. And he stayed yet another seven days ; and sent forth the dove; and she returned not again unto him any more . . . and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and, behold, the face of the ground was dried.

"And Noah builded an altar unto the Lord; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the Lord smelled the sweet savour; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake, for that the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done. While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, the day and night shall not cease. . . ."

This is the simple and unadorned tale given in the Jehovistic Document, so called because the name Jehovah or Yaveh, the tribal God of the Hebrews, is used throughout for the Divinity; this is translated as *The Lord* in the English version. In the Priestly Code, on the contrary, which was compiled by the priests during the captivity of the Jews by the waters of Babylon, the word Elohim, God, or, according to some, the Spirits, is used in its place.

After the downfall of the kingdom of Judah, the priests became the leading people among the Jewish captives, and in time the High Priest attained to that pre-eminent position formerly occupied by the kings, in much the same way as, after the sack of Rome, the bishops of that city came to hold a place in the estimation of the Western World, similar, if not identical, with that held by the Roman emperors. The priests were concerned mainly with rites and ceremonies and the proper occasions for religious feasts and fasts; they had also imbibed from the Babylonian scribes a passion for genealogies and chronological tables. These are the chief features of the Priestly contribution to the story as it appears in the Book of Genesis. The two accounts are mainly complementary, the Jehovistic version telling the plain unvarnished tale, while the Priestly Code adds genealogical details, the plan and dimensions of the ark and lays emphasis on the ritual aspect of the event, laying stress on the legal or contractual basis of the relations between God and man. In some few respects they are contradictory, for, while the Jehovistic narrative distinguishes between clean and unclean animals, the Priestly account makes no such distinction, moreover the Jehovistic writer says that the Flood lasted forty days and forty nights, while the Priest states that it lasted one hundred and fifty days before the waters began to sink, and that its total duration was twelve lunar months and ten days, which make up a solar year.

Both accounts have much in common with the Babylonian story, which will be described in the next chapter. In the Jehovistic account, which bears the closest resemblance to the other, we have the resolution of the divine powers to destroy mankind by a Great Flood, the revelation of the secret beforehand to a man by the Divinity, who tells him to build a great boat in which to save himself and all animal life. In both accounts the Flood is occasioned by heavy rain, lasts a number of days and is fatal to all other living things. In both, too, the raven and the dove are sent out, the dove returns but the raven does not, while in both the vessel comes to ground on a mountain, where in gratitude for his deliverance the hero offers a sacrifice, the sweet savour of which so pleases the deities that their anger is appeased.

In the Jehovistic account, as in the Babylonian, the number seven occurs frequently. In the former Noah has seven days' warning and takes seven of each clean animal into the ark, while he lets seven days elapse between the releases of the dove. In the Babylonian version the Flood lasts seven days at its full height, while the hero offers his sacrifices on seven mountains.

The Priestly narrative contains exact instructions for the construction of the ark, which closely resemble those of the Babylonian version, in both the ark is described as of several stories or decks, while in both the vessel is caulked with pitch or bitumen, and on his release the hero receives a divine blessing. Lastly the Babylonian hero is said by Berosus to have been the tenth king of the land, while, according to the pedigree given in the Priestly Code, Noah was the tenth in descent from Adam.

Now it is quite easy to account for the resemblances between the Priestly Code and the Babylonian version, for the latter was well known in Mesopotamia at the time of the captivity, and copies of it, on baked clay tablets, were doubtless to be found in the libraries of the chief cities there. But it is the Jehovistic version, written, as we have seen, some centuries before the Jews left their own country for the banks of the Euphrates, that contains the closest parallels, and before closing this chapter we must inquire how it came about that the same legend was current in two countries so far apart.

It has been suggested that perhaps the Hebrews, when they first settled in the land of Canaan, may have learned this story from the earlier inhabitants of that country, who may, in their turn, have come across some of the Babylonian literature a few centuries earlier. On the whole this explanation seems improbable. In the first place the people of Canaan were not much, if any, more advanced in civilisation than their Hebrew conquerors, with the exception of the Philistines, whose connections were with Crete, and possibly with Egypt, rather than with Mesopotamia. The hill tribes of Judæa, so far as they had any relations with the outside world, were in closer touch with Egypt and the Hittite Empire than with the kingdom of Babylon, which had long been under the domination of the foreign and almost illiterate Kassite kings. Such experience as they had had with the outside world had been largely that of being over-run by the rival conquering forces of the empires of the Middle East, scarcely a good medium for the introduction of a foreign literature.

It seems more likely that the story had been handed down among the Hebrews for a great many generations, and formed part of that store of legends that they had heard with their ears and that their fathers had told them. That they had sojourned for a time in Mesopotamia their own legends related, and it is to this sojourn that we must attribute the adoption of this story.

From light recently thrown upon the early history of the Hebrews, it would seem that they were originally a Semitic tribe living at or near Bir-Hafar, a small town in the Wadi Armah, about a hundred and eighty miles south-west of Basra, on a trade route leading from the Persian Gulf to the coast of the Red Sea. At an early date some of their party settled at Ur, to establish a caravanserai and bazaar at the terminus of the trade route, and while there some of them joined the forces of Rim-Sin, King of Larsa, and helped him in his struggles against Hammurabi, King of Babylon. After the defeat and death of Rim-Sin and the destruction of Ur in 2015 B.C., they thought it prudent to depart from Ur, in order to escape from the vengeance of the Babylonian monarch. Travelling under the leadership of Abram along the desert margin to the south-west of the Euphrates, they reached the country around Haran, where they abode for a time, but as the Babylonian influence was gaining ground in Assyria, they thought it wise to place the great Syrian desert between themselves and their former enemies. So they moved on southwards, again along the margin of the desert, as far as Transjordania, where they seem to have been settled, in sight of the Promised Land, before their departure under the aged Jacob for Egypt. During their sojourn at Ur of the Chaldees they may well have learned the story of the Mesopotamian flood from their Sumerian neighbours in that city, and preserved it, along with the story of the Creation and the Tower of Babel, among the general body of their folk-tales.

CHAPTER IV

Some Babylonian Versions

It has been known for many centuries that the Babylonians had a story of a Great Flood, in many respects closely resembling that related in the Book of Genesis. Berosus, a Babylonian priest, is known to have written in Greek a history of his country soon after 300 B.C. Unfortunately this work has not been preserved, but large extracts were copied from it by early Christian writers, before the book perished, and we are fortunate in having thus handed down to us his account of the Great Flood. The best account has been preserved by Eusebius, who wrote his history about A.D. 325, but he had consulted a work, written about a century earlier by Julius Africanus, who had copied this story from the writings of Alexander Polyhistor, who lived in the first century before our era, and who may well have obtained his version direct from the work of Berosus. Unfortunately the original Greek text of Eusebius has been lost, and we are dependent for our information upon a Latin version of an Armenian translation. We are, however, able to check the accuracy of this by a Greek version, preserved in the chronicle of Georgius Syncellus, who lived about A.D. 800.

From these versions we obtain the following story. In the reign of Xisuthros, the tenth king of Babylon, there was a Great Flood. Before this occurred, the god

Cronos appeared to the king in a dream, and warned him of its coming, instructing him to write the history of the world from its beginning and to bury it at Sippar. He was also told to build a ship, in which he was to embark with his family and friends, a sufficient supply of meat and drink and a number of living things, both beasts and birds. The king asked whither he was to sail, and received the command to sail to the gods.

So Xisuthros built a ship five furlongs long and two furlongs broad, into which he entered with his children and friends, a number of animals and ample supplies of provender. When the flood had come and had somewhat abated, the hero let loose some birds, which, as they could find neither food nor resting place, returned immediately to the ship. After a few more days he let loose the birds again, and they returned with their feet covered with clay. A third time he released them when they did not return. Then Xisuthros realised that dry land had again appeared, so he loosed the seams of his ship and looking out saw land ahead. He steered for this, grounded his ship on the side of a mountain, on which he disembarked with his wife, his daughter and his helmsman. Then he worshipped the ground, built an altar, and, having offered a sacrifice, he disappeared with those who had landed with him.

When his fellow passengers found that he did not return, they landed and sought him in vain, but a voice from heaven told them to fear the gods, to whose company Xisuthros and his companions had gone as a reward for their piety. They were also bidden to repair to Babylon, to unearth the scriptures and to distribute them among men. The voice also told them that they were in Armenia, and the chronicler adds that parts of the ship were to be seen on a mountain in that land in his day, and that people scraped the bitumen from it to use as charms. On arriving in the land of Babylon, the survivors dug up the scriptures that had been buried at Sippar, then restored the cities and re-peopled the country.

Though this account of the Flood has been known, as we have seen, since early days, it was commonly believed that Berosus, or his predecessors, had learned the story from the Jews during their sojourn in Mesopotamia. Since Berosus lived some centuries after the captivity, there was nothing unreasonable in this supposition. A generation ago, however, a startling discovery was made, followed in due course by others, all of which proved conclusively that the Babylonian story could not have been derived from the Hebrew version, but that it was immeasurably older, and had taken a legendary form long before Abram departed from Ur of the Chaldees.

It was in 1845 that Layard first began to dig in the mound of Kouyunjik, opposite to the town of Mosul, now known to contain part of the remains of Nineveh, the ancient capital of Assyria. In this mound he found the ruins of two palaces, that had been destroyed by fire, one, the South-west palace, built by Sennacherib, king of Assyria from 705 to 681 B.C., and the other, the North palace, the work of Assur-bani-pal, who reigned from 668 to 626 B.C. Among the ruins of these palaces, especially from those of the North palace, he brought back a number of treasures, including an enormous series of fragments of baked clay tablets, covered with inscriptions. These he presented to the British Museum, where their number were estimated by Sir Henry Rawlinson to exceed twenty thousand.

The bulk of these had evidently come from a library formed by Assur-bani-pal, and had been stored in an upper chamber in the palace. When the latter was burned, the floor gave way, and the tablets were precipitated on to the ground floor, when most of them were broken into many fragments. The authorities at the British Museum lost no time in calling in the aid of all the available Assyriologists in various countries in Europe, and it was soon found that, while most of the tablets were written in the Assyrian language, and were contemporary with the owner of the library, others were in the Babylonian dialect, and in some cases dated from a much earlier time. Besides records there were histories, as well as grammars and dictionaries, a number of fragments of epic poems, and a large number that dealt with mythological subjects.

The task of sorting these numerous fragments was a heavy one, and it was necessary to make copies of those intended for the study of foreign savants. Photography was not then used so frequently as at present, for it was still in its infancy, and the Trustees employed a draughtsman to copy the inscriptions, which it desired to send abroad for study. This draughtsman was George Smith.

George Smith had been engaged as a draughtsman, but he was not content merely to copy the inscriptions on the clay tablets, he was eager to know what they meant. With much labour he mastered the cuneiform script, then being deciphered, and learned the Assyrian language, as yet but imperfectly understood. Thus he was able to read, almost as well as the best experts of that day, the documents that it was his business to copy. While preparing for publication the fourth volume of cuneiform inscriptions for the Trustees of the British Museum, George Smith chanced on a fragment, on which he noticed references to the Creation. This led him to search through a series of tablets that he had classed as Mythological, and among these he found half of a curious tablet, that had originally contained six columns of text. Two of these were nearly perfect, and there remained parts of two others intact. On the third column he read the words: "the ship rested on the mountain of Nisir," after which was an account of the sending forth of a dove, and how, finding no resting place, it returned. This convinced Smith that he had discovered a tablet relating to the Flood, and reading through the document he found that it dealt with the actions of a hero, whose name was at

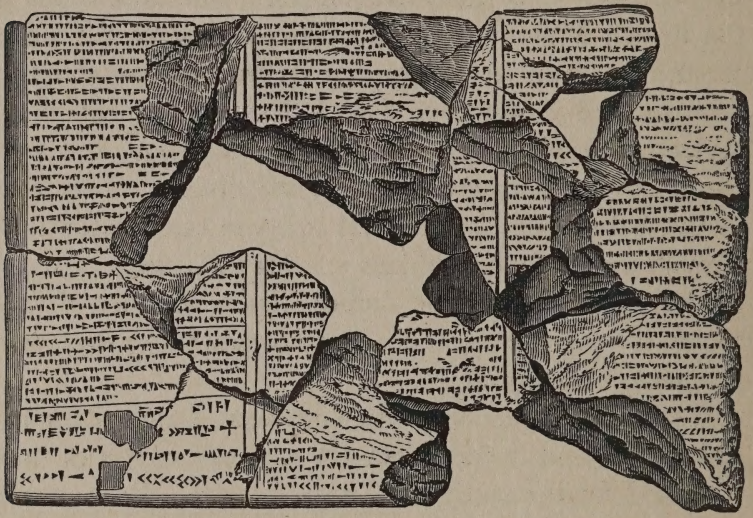

Fig. 1.—Back of tablet with account of the Flood.

that time read as Izdubar, though now it is known to have been Gilgamesh.

The name of Izdubar had already been found on another tablet, and Smith set to work to hunt for others. His search, prolonged for many days, was successful, and in the end he found, not only many other fragments of this account of the Flood, but parts of two other copies. When he had assembled all the fragments that he could find, George Smith made a careful translation of the whole text, in which there were, of course, many gaps, and published his discovery to the world before a meeting of the Society of Biblical Archæology on December 3rd, 1872. By this time he had discovered that the story of the Flood was only one of twelve episodes in a long epic recounting the adventures of Izdubar.

Naturally this discovery created a considerable stir, not only in the learned world but among the general public. Hitherto it had been believed that the Babylonian version, related by Berosus, had been borrowed during the time of the captivity from the Book of Genesis. Here, however, was a version, almost identical in many of its smallest details, yet dating from the seventh century B.C., and forming part of a larger epic, evidently of considerable antiquity.

Immediately after the paper had been read, Mr. E. Arnold, on behalf of the proprietors of the *Daily Telegraph*, invited the author to go out to Assyria at their expense, to search for further flood tablets. He had no sooner begun work on the site of Assur-bani-pal's palace, than he found a new fragment of the tablet that he had first discovered at the museum; this contained the command to construct an ark. Later on Smith returned home, bringing a number of tablets and fragments to complete the text. In the following year he went out again, this time with an expedition organised by the Trustees of the British Museum, and again returned with a rich store of tablets. He joined a third expedition in the winter of 1875-6, during which he succumbed to an illness, brought on largely by over-fatigue and his zeal for research.

More than half a century has elapsed since the tragic death of George Smith, and during that period enormous progress has been made in Mesopotamian studies. Not only can the Assyrian language be read with much greater accuracy, and the Babylonian as well, but students can now read an earlier dialect, belonging like them to the Semitic group of languages, and known as Akkadian. Nor is this all. Thanks to the dictionaries and grammars found in the ancient libraries, another and still older tongue has been discovered and can be read. This, quite distinct from the others, is the Sumerian, the speech used in the Mesopotamian cities before they were conquered by the men using the Semitic tongue. More recently a number of similar tablets have been brought back from Boghaz Keui, on the Halys river, and from other sites in Asia Minor. Some of these are documents written in the Sumerian and Akkadian languages, but others are in various dialects spoken by the Hittites. These are gradually being deciphered by a few scholars, who have distinguished on them a number of closely allied Hittite dialects.

With the increased knowledge of the Mesopotamian languages has come a further supply of tablets and inscriptions, many of them dating from much earlier times, so that, as the result of recent excavations, we have a large mass carrying back the history of that land well before 3000 B.C., and a few still earlier tablets, in a more primitive and pictographic script, that are now being deciphered. Among these are a number of tablets recounting the legend of the Flood.

The series from Kouyunjik, first noted by George Smith, still remain the principal text, but it has been amplified by the discovery of other fragments, and is now better understood, owing to the progress that has been made in the study of the Assyrian language. This version was written for the Royal Library of Nineveh in the seventh century B.C. by one Sin-liqi-unnini. Then there are fragments of a somewhat later edition in the Babylonian tongue. Earlier still is a tablet found at Ashur, and still earlier, about 1400 B.C., a number found at Boghaz Keui, written not only in the Akkadian but also in two Hittite dialects. Three tablets, written in Akkadian, cannot be much later than 2000 B.C., while there is a fragment of a tablet, written in the Sumerian tongue, which must be some centuries older, and shows us that this legend was taken over by the Semitic conquerors of Mesopotamia from their predecessors.

As we have already indicated, the story of the Flood was but one episode in a long epic poem dealing with the adventures of a hero, whose name was at first read as Izdubar, but is now known as Gilgamesh. This epic has now been translated and published in full on more than one occasion. It seems to have been made up of a number of myths and legends, all probably of great antiquity, and recounted of a popular hero, much in the same way as legends gathered round the person of Hercules. At a very early age, about 4000 B.C. we may conjecture, though Mr. Campbell Thompson has suggested 5000 B.C., Gilgamesh was king of Erech, which he was ruling in an autocratic fashion, so that his people prayed to their gods to be delivered from his tyranny. In answer to their prayers the gods created a wild man, known as Enkidu, and he was enticed into the city by the wiles of one of the dancing girls of the Temple of Ishtar or Ashteroth. Gilgamesh intervened and a tremendous fight followed. The result being indecisive, the two heroes so admired one another's prowess that they became fast friends and decided to make an expedition together to the Cedar Forest, which was guarded by the ogre, Humbaba. While attempting to take cedarwood to the city, they encountered Humbaba, and, by the help of the Sun-god, captured him and cut off his head. After that the goddess Ishtar fell in love with Gilgamesh, and, since he repelled her advances, begged her father Anu, the Sky-god, to make a divine bull to destroy the two heroes. Enkidu overcame this creature, to the annoyance of the gods, who decreed that he must die, though Gilgamesh was to be spared.

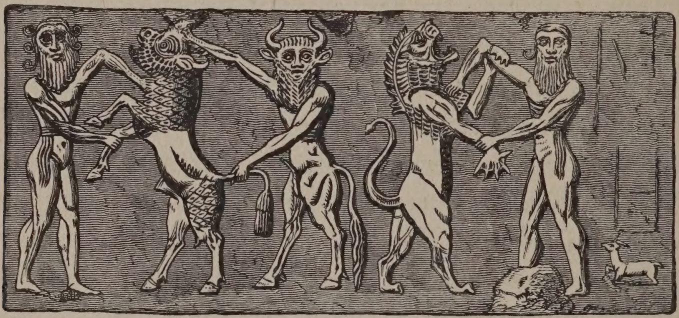

Fig. 2.—Gilgamesh and Enkidu fighting the bull.

Grieved and shocked by the death of his friend, and fearful of a similar fate, Gilgamesh set out on his wanderings in search of some means of acquiring eternal life. During these travels he meets with many adventures and receives much advice, and at length meets Ur-Shanabi, who tells him that he had been the boatman of Uta-Napishtim, who had escaped from the Great Flood, and had attained immortality. After a further search and many adventures, he at last finds this hero, who relates to him the story of the Flood and how he escaped from it, and how finally he received from the gods the gift of eternal life. This is the story that first attracted the attention of George Smith. Uta-Napishtim advised Gilgamesh to obtain a plant, which grew at the bottom of the sea. This he obtained successfully, but it was snatched from his hand by a snake while he was performing his ablutions in a pond. He then endeavoured to summon Enkidu back from the underworld, and in time was successful in doing so, and the poem ends with the description by the returned hero of the sad fate of those in the nether regions.

The story related to Gilgamesh by Uta-Napishtim closely resembles the biblical version, especially that told by the Jehovistic passages. The relater stated that he was living at Shuruppak, an old city on the banks of the Euphrates, when the great gods decided to send a flood. The gods Anu, Enlil, Ninili and Ennugi were discussing the project, and Ea, the Lord of Wisdom, was present, and repeated their words to the hut of reeds, saying: "O reed hut, reed hut, O wall, wall, O reed hut hearken, O wall attend!" "O man of Shuruppak, son of Ubara-Tutu, pull down thy house, build a ship, forsake thy possessions, take heed for thy life!" and further instructions, were given as to how the ship was to be built. Uta-Napishtim obeyed the commands of Ea and built a ship like a barge, on which he set a house one hundred and twenty cubits high, dividing it into six stories, each with nine rooms. This he caulked with bitumen, and into it he carried supplies of food and drink, including sesame-wine, oil and grape-wine. He further loaded it with gold and silver, seed, cattle, handicrafts, men and his family and relations.

Then, when Shamash, the Sun-god, had given him the signal, he entered the ship and closed the door, leaving the navigation of the vessel in the hands of Puzur-Amurri, the sailor. Then came a storm and hurricane, which lasted for six days and six nights, and on the seventh morning the ship ran aground on the Mountain Nisir. After seven more days he let out a dove, which returned having found no resting place, then he sent forth a swallow, which returned in the same way. Then he released a raven, and, as the waters were now abating, she did not return. Uta-Napishtim then landed, and made an offering and poured out libations on the top of the mountain. Then he set out vessels by sevens, and under them heaped up reeds and cedar-wood and myrtle. The gods smelt the sweet savour and gathered like flies about him as he offered the sacrifice. When Enlil saw that Uta-Napishtim was saved he was wrath, but Ea arrived and reproved him for attempting to destroy a sinless man. He told Enlil that he might send lions, and leopards, and famine, and plague, to diminish the numbers of men, but he must not again attempt to destroy all mankind by a flood. Enlil was appeased, and taking Uta-Napishtim by the hand, and making his wife kneel beside him, he declared that they should be as gods, and dwell for ever, afar off, at the mouths of the rivers.

That in this epic and in the Hebrew version we have one and the same story, only varied to suit the religious beliefs of the different peoples, there can be no reasonable doubt. Nor can we hesitate to believe that the Babylonian account is the older, since we have fragments of a Sumerian version that must date from before 2000 B.C. Further than this the wrestling of Gilgamesh, or Izdubar as his name was formerly read, and Enkidu, formerly called Eabani, as well as the fight between the latter and the bull, was a favourite device for illustrations at a much earlier date, and representations of these scenes occur on cylinder seals that go back well before 3000 B.C.

The tale is obviously very old, yet the main episode seems to be an account, however, much distorted, and exaggerated, of an event that really happened. It is in fact a legend, however many mythical details have become entwined in it. At what early date the catastrophe took place we cannot as yet well determine, but since, as we shall see, there is reason to believe that Gilgamesh was actually a king of Erech, at a date not far from 4000 B.C., we may surmise that the Flood took place before that time.

It will have been noticed that the version described in this chapter, while it resembles in many details, differs in some important respects from the story of Xisuthros as related by Berosus. They are clearly two versions of the same tale, yet by no means wholly alike. There must, therefore, have been more than one variety of the story current in Babylonia in early days, and we are fortunate in that during the last few years tablets have been found giving another, though more prosaic account of the same event. This account will be described in the next chapter.

It will be remembered that on one occasion Gilgamesh and Enkidu were attacked by a divine bull, which was slain by the latter. Another feature of the story is that on his way to visit Uta-Napishtim, whose name was formerly read as Hasisadra, whence the title of Huxley's paper mentioned in the first chapter, Gilgamesh came to a strange country, where he met gigantic and strange monsters, half men and half scorpions, whose feet were below the earth, while their heads touched the gates of heaven.

The occurrence of two episodes, one relating to a bull and the other to scorpions, in the cycle of the adventures of Gilgamesh, has led a school of mythologists to suggest that the epic is a Zodiacal myth, and relates the story of the passage of the sun through the twelve signs of the Zodiac. On this supposition Uta-Napishtim, the hero of the Flood, was considered to represent Aquarius, the water-man, and the flood story was thus merely an episode in a Zodiacal myth.

It is, of course, possible that this may be the true explanation of the epic as a whole, though this need not compel us to believe that the Flood story was composed to fit Aquarius; it may equally well be that the already existing legend of the Flood was selected to fill the place in the cycle requiring a story of a water-man. There is also another possible explanation. The epic of Gilgamesh is, as we have seen, very old and was clearly extremely popular. Are we equally sure that the idea of the twelve signs of the Zodiac are as ancient? May it not be that when these constellations were selected to mark the passage of the sun, they received names drawn from the episodes of the popular epic? Again, there are twelve Zodiacal signs, and we have only three episodes that are claimed to correspond to them. Is it not possible that this twenty-five per cent of correspondence is merely a coincidence.

CHAPTER V

THE ROYAL LISTS

We have seen in the last chapter that among the early versions of the Story of the Flood there is one, a fragment only of which has been preserved, which is in the Sumerian language, and was written before 2000 B.C. This was found inscribed on a broken tablet, which was one of a number of such fragments found only a few years ago on the site of the city of Nippur, a very sacred city of the Sumerians. Other fragments related to the great epic story of the Creation, but several were in a more prosaic vein and contained lists of kings. Parts of four such lists were found, all of which, to judge from the fragments remaining, were copies of the same document. The best preserved is that known as P. No. 2, the greater part of which was published by Professor Arno Poebel in the Babylonian Section of the University Museum, Philadelphia, Vol. V. No. 2. Subsequently Dr. Leon Legrain found another fragment of this tablet, which seems to have contained a complete list of the kings who ruled in the Sumerian cities of Mesopotamia after the Flood. The date of this tablet can now be determined with almost exact precision, for it contains the statement that it was written in the fourth or fifth year of Enlil-bani, the tenth, or according to some accounts the eleventh king of Isin. The tablet was, therefore, written in 2141 or

2140 B.C. The other tablets from Nippur, including those containing the Epic of Gilgamesh and the Story of the Creation, were undoubtedly written about the same time.

Soon after the Nippur tablets had been published and the learned had been trying to puzzle out the succession of the kings, some of whose names appeared on these much mutilated records, Mr. H. Weld-Blundell brought back from Mesopotamia a number of clay tablets that he had secured there; these he presented to the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, where they have been studied and translated by Professor S. Langdon. The most important of these is a prism, generally known as the Weld-Blundell prism, containing long inscriptions on each face. This is usually cited as W-B. 444. There was, in addition, a smaller tablet, which has a bearing on our problem, which is known as W-B. 62.

The Weld-Blundell prism, W-B. 444, was found to contain a complete list of the kings, who ruled in Mesopotamia after the Flood, and it was brought down to the end of the reign of Sin-Magir, the thirteenth king of Isin, who is now known to have died in 2098 B.C.; it must have been written, therefore, forty-two years after the Nippur tablet, and is perfect but for a few abrasions, which have damaged a few lines of the text. Here, therefore, we have a complete, or all but complete, list of these kings, for some of the missing portions can be partly restored from the Nippur list, but more than that we have a list, claiming to be complete, of the kings who ruled in that country before the Flood.

The other tablet, W-B. 62, is also important for our purpose, for, though it does not give the list of the post-diluvian monarchs, it enumerates the kings that reigned before the Flood. Moreover, although like the prism it was written at Larsa or Ellasar, the number and the names of the antediluvian monarchs do not agree with those given on the prism, though in one point this list more closely resembles that handed down by Berosus.

It may be well here to set out in parallel columns the names of the kings derived from these three sources, adding in brackets the cities in which they bore rule; together with the lengths of their reigns.

W–B. 444.	W–B. 62.	Berosus.
1. Alulim (Eridu) 28,800	1. Alulim (Habur) 67,200	1. Alorus (Babylon) 36,000
2. Alagar (Eridu) 36,000	2. Alagar (Habur) 72,000	3. Alaparos (Babylon) 10,800
	3. kidunnu-sakinkin (Ellasar) 72,000	
	4. . . uk ? ku ? (Ellasar) 21,600	
3. Enmenluanna (Badtibira) 43,200	6. Enmenluanna (Badtibira) 21,600	3. Amelon (Pantibiblos) 46,800
4. Enmen(gal)anna 28,800		4. Ammenon (Pantibiblos) 43,200
		5. Megalaros (Pantibiblos) 64,800
5. Dumuzi-sib (Badtibira) 36,000	5. Dumuzi-sib (Badtibira) 28,800	6. Daonos (Pantibiblos) 36,000
		7. Euedorachos (Pantibiblos) 64,800
6. Ensibzianna (Larak) 28,800	7. Ensibzianna (Larak) 36,000	8. Amempsinos (Larak) 36,000
7. Enmenduranna (Sippar) 21,000	8. Enmenduranna (Sippar) 72,000	9. Opartes (Larak) 28,000
	9. Arad-gin (Shuruppak) 28,800	
8. Ubardudu (Shuruppak) 18,600	10. Ziusuddu (Shuruppak) 36,000	10. Xisuthros (Shuruppak) 64,800

While there is general agreement between these three lists, for some of the names of the kings and their cities agree in the two first, and, allowing for transliteration into Greek, do not differ greatly from those in the third column, in other cases they are quite distinct and bear no resemblance to one another. The number of kings is stated as eight, ten and ten, the second column gives the names of two kings of Larsa, which do not appear in the others, while there are a number of variations, especially in the figures given for the preposterously long reigns, which never agree. It seems clear that these versions have been copied, perhaps over and over again, from earlier documents, doubtless damaged and perhaps in a

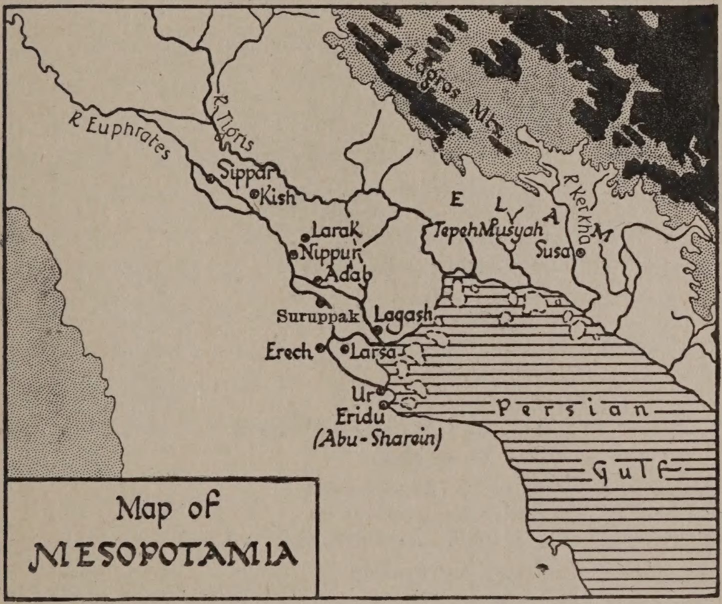
R Euphrates
R Tigris
Zagros Mts
Sippar
Kish
E L A M
Larak
Nippur
Adab
Tepeh Musyah
Susa
R Kerkha
Suruppak
Lagash
Erech
Larsa
Ur
Eridu
(Abu-Sharein)
Persian
Gulf
Map of
MESOPOTAMIA

Fig. 3.—Map of Mesopotamia, showing the sites of the antediluvian cities.

more ancient and imperfectly understood form of writing. It is no wonder, therefore, that serious errors have crept in, especially in the lengths of the reigns.

The text of the passages in the Weld-Blundell prism are so important for understanding the question, that I am giving them in full, with his kind permission, from the admirable translation made by Professor Langdon.

> Rulership which from heaven descended.
> At Eridu rulership (began).
> At Eridu Alulim was king.
> He ruled 28,800 years.
> Alagar ruled 36,000 years.
>   Two kings.
> 64,800 years they ruled.
> Eridu was overthrown.
> The rulership to Badtibira
>   passed.
> At Badtibira Enmenluanna
> ruled 43,200 years.
> Enmengalanna
> ruled 28,800 years.
> Dumuzisib ruled 36,000 years
>   Three kings.
> They ruled 108,000 years.
> Badtibira was overthrown
> The rulership was established at Larak
> At Larak Ensibzianna
> ruled 28,800 years.
>   One king.
> He ruled 28,800 years.
> Larak was overthrown.
> The rulership passed to Sippar.
> At Sippar Enmenduranna
> was king and ruled 21,000 years.
>   One king.
> He ruled 21,000 years.
> Sippar was overthrown.
> The rulership was established at Shuruppak.
> At Shuruppak Ubardudu
> was king and ruled 18,600 years.
>   One king.

He ruled 18,600 years.
Five cities.
Eight kings.
They ruled 241,200 years.
The Deluge came up (on the Land).

Such is the earliest account that we have of the Flood and of the kings that ruled the country before that catastrophe, but of the Deluge itself the prism says no more than that it occurred.

After the Flood the Weld-Blundell prism, like the tablets from Nippur, enumerates all the kings that had ruled in Mesopotamia from that time until the date at which the tablets were written. These are arranged in dynasties, twenty in all, no two of which reigned consecutively in the same city. Each king is mentioned, with the length of his reign, then follow the number of kings and the total number of years during which the dynasty was in power. The lengths of the reigns of the first few dynasties are almost as long as those of the antediluvian monarchs, but they soon reach normal proportions.

The first dynasty to rule after the Flood was the First Dynasty of Kish, with a total of twenty-three kings, who are said to have ruled in the aggregate for 24,510 years, 3 months and 3 days. In spite of the appearance of strict accuracy implied by the odd months and days, the numbers are clearly unreliable, since the thirteenth king is said to have reigned for 1500 years, while the shortest reign of the dynasty was that of Tupzah, the eighteenth monarch, to whom only 140 years have been attributed.

After the fall of Kish comes the First Dynasty of Erech, with twelve kings totalling 2310 years; the longest reign being 1200 years and the shortest 6. Of these the fifth was Gilgamesh, the hero of the epic described in the last chapter. Here we are beginning to get nearer to reliable figures. Then follows the First Dynasty of Ur, containing four kings with a total of 177 years; this is quite normal, except that the first monarch, Mes-anni-padda, is credited with a reign of eighty years, somewhat long for the founder of a dynasty.

After that follow the dynasties of Awan, three kings ruling for 356 years, the Second Dynasty of Kish, with eight kings ruling for 3195 years, Hamasi, one king with a reign of 360 years, the Second Dynasty of Erech, with three kings ruling for 420 years, all of which are impossible numbers. Then comes a break in the record, with only a few fragmentary syllables, but we gather from the Nippur tablet that this was the Second Dynasty of Ur, which had four kings and ruled for 108 years.

The dynasties that follow may be tabulated thus:

City.	No. of Kings.	Length of Reign.
Adab	3	90 years
Maer	6	136
Kish III		100
Akshak	6	93
Kish IV	7	491 or probably 97 2/3
Erech III	1	25
Agade	11	181
Erech IV	5	30
Gutium	20 or 21	125 years and 40 days
Erech V	1	7 days
Ur III	5	108
Isin	14	203

The extraordinary length of the reigns of some of these kings at first led students to consider that all the earlier dynasties were mythical, and of no value for historical purposes. This view was, however, to some extent set aside by some remarkable discoveries made during the last ten years.

In the spring of 1919 Dr. H. R. Hall visited Mesopotamia on behalf of the Trustees of the British Museum, and carried out some preliminary explorations on the site of Ur. During his stay there, Dr. Hall discovered a small isolated mound, known as Tell el 'Obeid, or more correctly Tell al-'Ubaid, lying some four miles W.N-W of Ur, on the line of an old canal. Here he found quantities of painted pottery, which, as he showed, bore a close resemblance to the wares from the First Settlement at Susa, and, belonging to a much later date, the remains of a temple, from which he brought back parts of two large lions of copper.

Soon afterwards the Trustees of the British Museum arranged with the authorities of the University Museum of Pennsylvania to make a thorough exploration of the site of Ur. This work was placed in the hands of that experienced excavator Mr. Leonard Woolley. The work was begun in 1922, and at the opening of the second season in the autumn of 1923 Woolley began systematic excavations at Tell al-'Ubaid, including the uncovering of the great temple from which Hall had obtained the copper lions.

Resting upon a small natural mound, which rose slightly above the level of the plain, Woolley found a solid platform, laid upon foundations of stone, though the lower courses of its walls were built of burnt brick, set in a mud cement, while the upper courses and the core of the structure were composed of sun-dried bricks. This platform was approached from the plain by two sets of stone steps. Upon this platform had been erected the temple, of which considerable ruins still remained. It was here, about 8 metres distant from the temple wall, in which it had been embedded, that Woolley found the foundation inscription of the temple, which told him, not only the name of the deity in whose honour it had been erected, but the name of the king, under whose directions the work had been carried out. The inscription had been engraved upon a slab of white marble, shaped like the plano-convex bricks then used for building, and measured nine centimetres by six. The inscription that it bore, when translated into our own tongue, reads:—" Nin-khursag: A-an-ni-pad-da, king of Ur, son of Mes-an-ni-pad-da, king of Ur, has built a temple for Nin-khursag."

Now Mes-anni-padda was, as we have seen, the first king of Ur, the founder of the First Dynasty of that city, but the name of A-anni-padda does not follow or, indeed occur, in any of the lists. On the other hand, as has already been pointed out, Mes-anni-padda is said to have reigned for 80 years, a somewhat long reign for any monarch, and more particularly for the founder of a dynasty. If, however, we imagine, as Woolley has suggested, that the name and reign of the less important son have been merged by the error of a scribe into those of his more distinguished father, we can understand, not only the absence of A-anni-padda's name from the lists of kings, but the unexpected length attributed to the reign of his father.

The discovery of this tablet convinced everyone that the Weld-Blundell prism and the Nippur tablets were dealing with historical events, at any rate after the rise of the First Dynasty of Ur, and Woolley's explanation of the absence of A-anni-padda's name has received general assent. For a time, however, the historical nature of the earlier part of the list was doubted, and it was held by most people, and by Woolley himself, that the two first dynasties, said to have reigned after the Flood at Kish and Erech, and still more the antediluvian monarchs, were purely mythical.

Then an expedition was sent out, organised by the University of Oxford and the Field Museum of Chicago, which began exploring a site, believed to be that of Kish. They soon found that their surmise was correct, and, digging down through the later layers, they came to a deposit, in which the inscriptions and other things found seemed to be contemporary with those attributed to the dynasty of Mes-anni-padda at Ur. Considerably lower down they met with another layer, which will be described more fully in a later chapter, in which they found, amongst other things, the tombs of kings. Though no inscriptions have yet been found in this layer mentioning any of the kings, whose names are given in the lists as belonging to the First Dynasty of Kish, it has been assumed, and not without reason, that this layer, being older than the First Dynasty of Ur, must belong to the First Dynasty of Kish. If this be so, then all the Post-diluvian dynasties must have had a real existence, however much the lengths of the kings' reigns have been exaggerated.

Among the remains at Kish there were found a number of clay tablets, bearing inscriptions in a primitive pictographic script. Unfortunately these were found under circumstances that showed that they did not belong to the layer in which they were discovered, and so far none of these have been met with at Kish *in situ*. At Jemdet Nasr, however, a deserted village lying about seventeen miles to the north-east of Kish, Professor Langdon found similar tablets, containing inscriptions in a pictographic script, associated with a certain type of painted pottery. Similar painted pottery has been found at Kish, in a layer lying still lower than that attributed to the First Dynasty, but so far no tablets of this type have been found among them.

Some progress has been made by Langdon in deciphering this pictographic script, and we are assured that it is ancestral to the ordinary cuneiform script used in later days. It is, however, very different in appearance, and we can well believe that many mistakes must have arisen when, in after years, the scribes were making copies of what had been recorded in this very early form of writing.

However that may be, most authorities are now prepared to accept the lists as substantially accurate accounts of what really happened, except on two points. Naturally they decline to accept the impossible lengths of the earlier reigns, and all are agreed that these dynasties did not in every case follow one another, as the lists state or imply, but that there was a certain amount of overlapping, and that during some of the time two, or even more, dynasties were reigning over different parts of the country at the same time.

The chief matter in dispute at the moment is the extent of this overlapping, and various schemes have been published and doubtless others will appear in due course. Those who advocate the greatest amount of such overlap, thereby reducing the date of the First Dynasty of Ur, have implied that the shorter the chronology the more scientific and critical is its exponent, and have thus affected the minds of students to such a degree that competition is arising as to who can put forward the shortest possible scheme. The really scientific ideal, however, is neither to aim at the shortest or longest chronological scheme possible, but to advance an hypothesis that will most nearly fit all the facts that are at the moment available. Until, however, some general agreement on this point has been achieved, it will be impossible to fix, even with approximation, the date of the Flood with any degree of finality.

CHAPTER VI

THE ARCHÆOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

THOUGH it is by no means easy to rewrite the history of Mesopotamia before 3000 B.C. from the lists of Kings and from such other early inscriptions as have been found up to the present time, we can derive considerable assistance from the archæological evidence, which is extensive and increasing rapidly in quantity and importance. Pottery, obviously dating from very early times, has been found in abundance, and from widely distributed sites. Some of this has been found deep down in mounds, and overlayed by layers, a few of which can be dated with precision. The earliest of such sites to be discovered and explored was that of Susa, and for many purposes this still remains the most important.

On the north-east side of the Mesopotamian plain rise the Zagros mountains, separating the valley of the Tigris and Euphrates from the Iranian plateau, which forms the greater part of the present Persian Empire. From this range of mountains flow a number of streams, some of considerable size, to empty into the river Tigris or to find their way direct into the Persian Gulf. One such stream, now joining the Tigris near its mouth, but formerly emptying itself into the Gulf, is the river Kerkha, and beside the banks of its waters lay the ancient Susa, the biblical Shushan, in the time of Cyrus and Darius the winter capital of the Persian kings.

Susa lay on the left bank of the river, in a broad valley, just above the point where the stream left the mountains to enter the plain below. Its site had long been known, but it was between 1891 and 1909 that a French expedition, under the leadership of M. Jaques de Morgan, carried out a most extensive series of excavations into the mound that concealed what was left of this city. Here they found the remains of a number of successive settlements, one lying above the other, and among them relics of the ancient Persian monarchy of the time of Cyrus the Great, relatively near the summit. Here we are not concerned with anything so modern as the sixth century before our era, and we must confine our attention to the two lowest layers, containing the refuse of the first two settlements.

The lowest layer, eighty-four feet below the top of the mound, contained the remains of the first settlement, usually known as Susa I. This was a small and humble village, situated on a low hillock, about sixteen feet in height, by the bank of the Kerkha river; it was surrounded by a low wall of mud or beaten earth. Outside the village lay the cemetery, where the bodies of the dead had been laid to rest in a number of different positions.

On the site of the village were found great quantities of painted pottery, showing that the potter's art was well known to the inhabitants; also a number of finely worked flint implements of various types. Among the remains of their meals were a number of bones, but only those of wild animals, suggesting that the people possessed no domesticated flocks and herds. For their supplies of meat they seem to have depended upon the products of their hunting expeditions, in which, it appears, they were

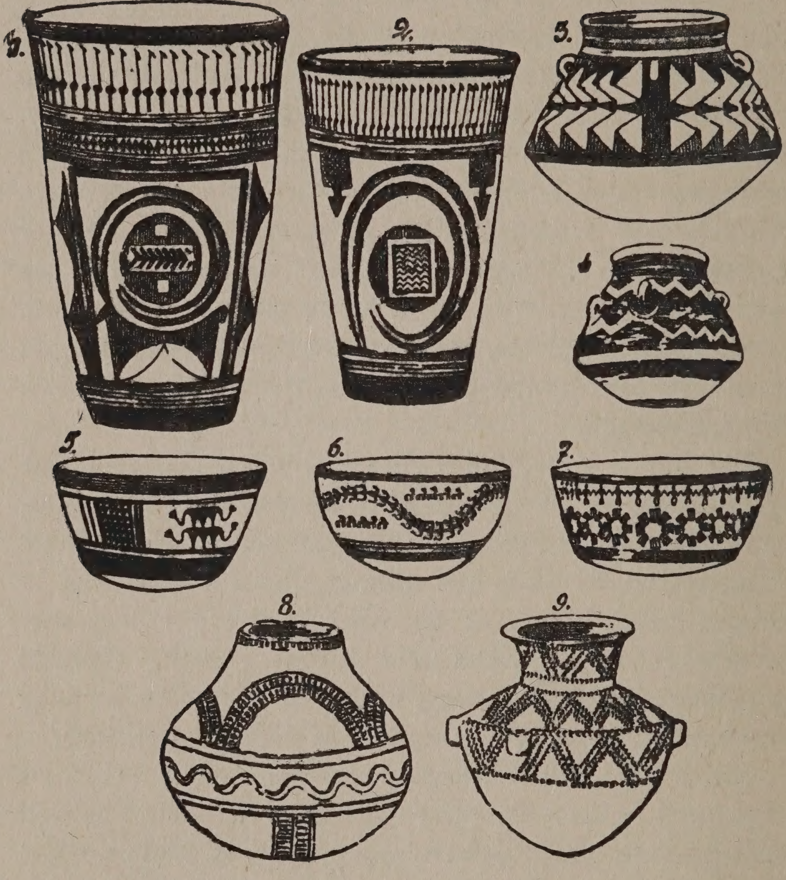

Fig. 4.—Pottery from Susa I.

assisted by dogs. Some rough querns or corn rubbers give us a hint that they were cultivators of grain, or would do so if we could be quite sure that these objects belonged to the bottom layer; on this, however, there is some doubt. Nevertheless, as we shall see later, other folk, using almost identical pottery, have left behind them undoubted remains of querns and hoes and sickles, so that we may feel confident that the people of Susa I, though not possessing any domesticated animals, other than the dog, were, however, acquainted with the art of agriculture.

The graves in the cemetery without the village walls tell us more about the life and habits of the people. In every grave there were vases or pots, from three to five in number, placed close to the head of the deceased. The women had also circular mirrors of copper, and little pots or boxes, which from their shape and size have been termed cosmetic pots, though their real use is uncertain. Whatever the use of these little pots may have been, the mirrors show us that the ladies of Susa I were careful of their appearance and not, it would seem, without a little spice of vanity. With each man was buried a copper axe, which seems to have been wrapped in some woven material; from the impressions left upon the metal, this seems to have been linen. A fragment of one of the axes has recently been analysed, and it was found to be 99 per cent of copper, a very exceptional purity.

Thus the people of Susa I were far from being uncivilised, for though they obtained their meat by hunting, they almost certainly grew corn, cultivated flax and wove linen, while they had made considerable advance in the art of metallurgy, and could make axes and mirrors of singularly pure metal. Besides that they made and used quantities of pottery, which, as we shall see, was of a highly finished type and decorated with designs that were far from being the work of beginners. The first people to occupy the site of Susa were not only civilised, but, as is clear from their remains, must have descended from people who had had a civilisation for some centuries at least.

Dr. H. Frankfort, who has made a close study of the pottery, believes that it was made on a leather model, and that the decoration developed from the use of vessels made in two shades of this material. This may be true in some cases, but in others, it has been argued with some skill, the designs appear to have been derived from those usual in basket work. The pots seem to have been made on a *tournette*, a slow wheel turned by the hand, and the black paint used in their decoration was, so Frankfort thinks, some ferruginous earth mixed with an alkaline substance as a flux.

Most of the pots were made of fine clay; they were very thin, and of a buff colour decorated in black in a somewhat standardised ornament. A very fine collection of this ware is to be seen in Paris, at the Louvre, and illustrations of it have appeared in many books. The vases obtained from the graves are so thin and so porous that Frankfort believes that they were not intended for use, but were merely imitations of leather cups made specially for use in graves.

The people of Susa I were evidently in touch with other regions, for certain materials were found in the cemetery which must have been brought from elsewhere. Some of the graves contained objects of turquoise, which is not to be found in the neighbourhood, while in others there were tools of obsidian, a natural volcanic glass, which does not occur nearer than Alagheuz in Armenia. There were also a few seals and some vases of red pottery; these, according to Frankfort, must have come from North Syria or Asia Minor.

Such are the more important remains that were found in the lowest layer at Susa, and in the cemetery in which its inhabitants laid their dead. Above this layer was another, five feet or more in thickness, in which nothing was found. It has been assumed, therefore, that the site was abandoned for some time, probably for several centuries, during which the wind-blown dust accumulated around the decaying remnants of their houses. What led to the abandonment of this first settlement is uncertain; it has been suggested that a period of drought made the place uninhabitable. This, as we shall see, is

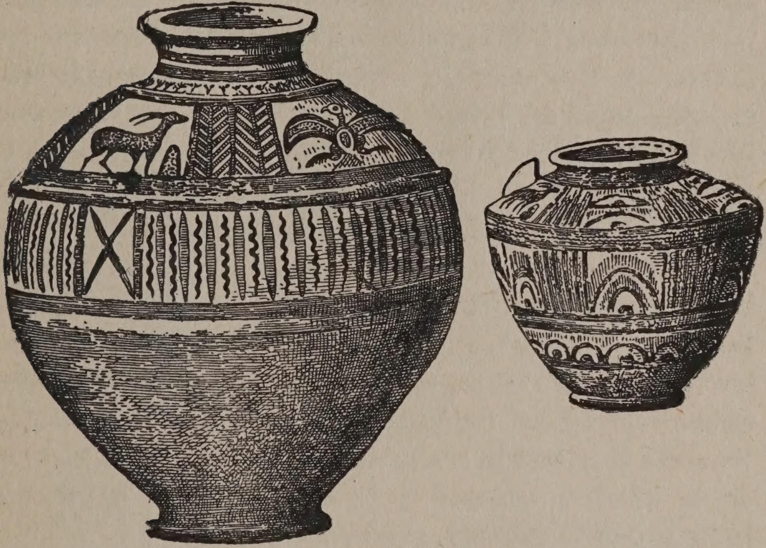

Fig. 5.—Pottery from Susa II.

unlikely, but the problem will be discussed again, in the light of further evidence, in the next chapter.

Above the sterile layer, in which no pottery was found, came that known as Susa II. Here again was an abundance of pottery, but the shapes were different. Instead of the tumbler-shaped cups and hemi-spherical bowls, we have globular vases with small necks, pots with shoulders and sometimes with spouts. The pots are differently decorated, since most of them are polychrome or many-coloured, being still of a buff ware, but decorated in designs painted in red and black. The designs, too, are quite different. Some of these are naturalistic, or only slightly stylised, such as representations of birds and animals. In many cases the pot is divided into panels by a series of parallel or wavy lines. Similar pottery has been found at Fara, the ancient Shuruppak, and in the lowest layer at Ashur, and, as we shall see, pottery not unlike it has been found at other sites in Mesopotamia. By some it is said to resemble some pottery from Cappadocia, which is believed to be of Hittite origin, but the latter is clearly of much more recent date.

Before discussing the relationship between the first and second settlements at Susa, about which there is considerable difference of opinion, we must describe other sites at which wares have been found, very similar to those of Susa I. About eighty-five miles from the site of Susa, a little to the north of west, lying a thousand feet above the sea and more than five hundred feet above the level of Susa, there is a series of mounds on the top of a narrow ridge. One of these, known as Tepeh Musyan, was explored in 1903 by MM. Gautier and Lampre. The mound was found to contain vast quanti-

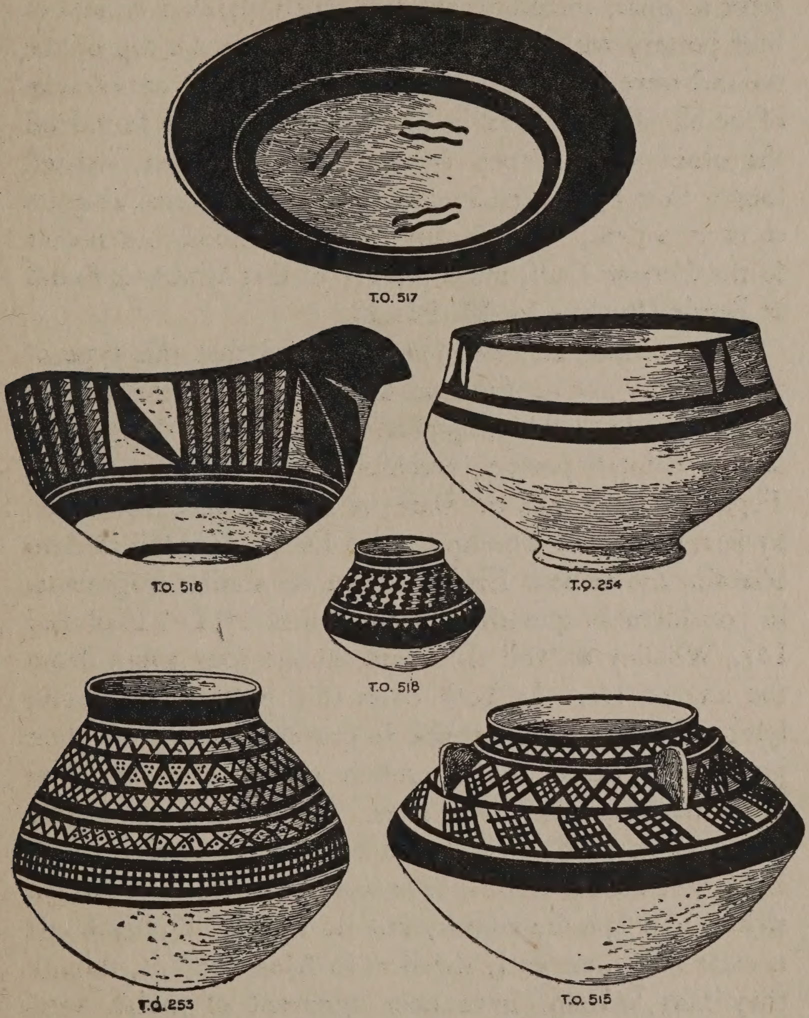
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Fig. 6.—Pottery from Tell al-'Ubaid.

ties of pottery, closely resembling that from the lowest layer at Susa, including the thin finely painted vessels of buff pottery with black decoration. Near the top of the mound were found fragments that had all the appearance of being slightly later in date than the latest found on the other site. Tepeh Musyan had, therefore, existed longer than Susa I, and had not been abandoned at quite so early a date. In the same neighbourhood, but nearer to the Persian Gulf, more pottery of this kind was found at Bender Bushire by M. Pézard.

After a time, however, it was found that this type of pottery was not confined to the foot-hills of the Zagros mountains, but could be picked up elsewhere. Fragments of fine painted pottery, resembling more closely that of Tepeh Musyan than the wares of Susa I, were discovered by Mr. Campbell Thompson and Dr. H. R. Hall at Abu Sharain, the ancient Eridu. Later on similar fragments, in considerable quantities, were found by Dr. Hall and Mr. Woolley at Tell al-'Ubaid, about four miles from the site of Ur. In both cases this pottery was found lying on the surface, but also in graves, which, from their position, appeared to be much earlier than the first Sumerian graves on those sites. With this pottery were found hoes, both of flint and of pottery, ground stone axes, flint flakes, arrow-heads, corn-grinders and querns, sickles and spindle-whorls, but no objects of metal. It is clear that these early dwellers in Mesopotamia, though they may perhaps have been ignorant of metal, were cultivators of the soil, so that we may be fairly confident that the people of Susa I also practised agriculture. Since then similar pottery has been found in small quantities at a number of neighbouring sites, such as Tell-el-

Judaidah, Tell-el-Lahm and Abu Rasain. Dr. Andrae found some in stratum H at Kalaat Sherkat, the ancient Ashur, it has turned up at Khazneh Tepeh, near Kerkûk, while more recently Dr. Albright has recorded the discovery of a few pot-sherds at Tell Zeidân, on the east bank of the Lower Balikh, just above its junction with the Euphrates, and from Tell-es-Semen in the same region.

M. de Morgan, when he first explored the site of Susa, was struck with the enormous depth of the deposits, and, basing his calculations on the rate of accumulation of deposits in the Nile Valley, suggested that the first village dated from about 18,000 B.C. This date was accepted by Montelius, and has been quoted by the Cambridge Ancient History. Few archæologists today would place any value on dates arrived at by these means, for it is now known that the rate of accumulation varies enormously according to the nature of the site, the climate and the state of civilisation. Before his death de Morgan suggested 5000 to 4500 B.C. as the date of the foundation of the settlement, and, as we shall see, this fits in very well with the other evidence that we now possess.

Dr. H. Frankfort, in his masterly essay on "Early Pottery in the Near East," states his firm conviction that there is no connection between the pottery found in the first two settlements at Susa. On the other hand de Morgan, and after him M. Pottier, believed that the wares of the Second Settlement were derived directly from those of the First. Discoveries, made since these views were first published, tend to show that the truth lies somewhere between these divergent views.

In 1926 Professor Langdon explored the ruins of a deserted village at Jemdet Nasr, about seventeen miles to the North-west of the site of the city of Kish. Among the remains of this village, which had been destroyed at a very early date and had never again been inhabited, he found a great quantity of pottery, decorated in several colours in a style resembling that of the pots of Susa II. This type of pottery, which has now been found at Fara and on the sites of Ashur and Kish, Frankfort believes to have been the characteristic ware used over a large area, extending from the Tas mountains, in the South-east of Asia Minor, to the Zagros range, which separates Mesopotamia from the Persian plateau. This he calls the Lowland Civilisation, and suggests that its influence was felt in Palestine, Egypt, Cyprus and Asia Minor. On the other hand the buff and black pottery of Susa I he attributes to what he calls the Highland Civilisation, which he believes extended from lower Mesopotamia across the Persian plateau as far as Seistan and Baluchistan. Later on some fragments of this Lowland pottery were found at Kish, in such a position as to suggest a possibility that they dated from the time of the First Dynasty of that city.

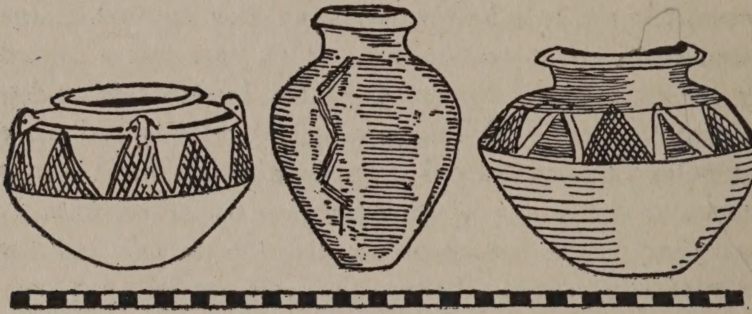


Fig. 7.—Polychrome pots of the Lowland type from Jemdet Nasr.

It will have been seen from what has been said that the Highland painted pottery, of the type found in the lowest layer at Susa, was widely distributed throughout Mesopotamia and among the foot-hills of the Zagros mountains that separate it from the high plateau of Persia. From the site of Susa it disappeared for a time, then re-appeared, in a more developed form, along with pots, also of a later type, belonging to the Lowland civilisation, in the Second Settlement at that place.

Even in its earliest phase the high finish of this ware shows that it was not the result of a first attempt to practise the potter's art, while, if Dr. Frankfort is to be believed, the decoration was mature and long past its infancy. This pottery must have had a long past history, but this cannot have been in Mesopotamia or in the near neighbourhood of Susa. Where it arose and passed through its early stage has been a mystery, or, at the best, a matter of surmise, until quite recently new light has been shed upon the question.

Only a few months ago, on May 25th, 1929, a German explorer, Professor Ernst Herzfeld, published in the pages of the *Illustrated London News*, pictures and descriptions of some discoveries that he had made recently on some early sites in Persia. At Damghan, east of Teheran, and at Persepolis, in the province of Fars, he has found remains of villages, among the refuse of which he could find no signs of metal, and which he therefore terms neolithic. Here he has found tools of flint and stone, together with vast quantities of pottery. This pottery, he states, and the illustrations that he has published prove that his statement is correct, very closely resembles that from the First Settlement at Susa. Now the people of Susa I had axe-heads and mirrors of copper, while the men of the Persian villages had only tools of stone. He concludes, therefore, not without some reason, that the villages that he has found are of earlier date than the lowest layer at Susa.

It is always dangerous to class a civilisation as neolithic because at first one is unable to discover metal among its remains, and we have many instances of the occurrence of a metalless people, allied to and yet contemporary with, or even later than, one among whom metal was well known. We can only judge, if at all, the relative age of the two sets of settlements by the pottery, and until a greater number of specimens from both sets of sites have been compared, it would be hazardous to express a final opinion. We know now, however, that wares allied to those of Susa I were widely distributed, not only over Mesopotamia, but over large parts, at any rate, of Persia, and we may conjecture that it was somewhere in the latter region, or in the countries adjacent to it, that this thin painted pottery of the Highland civilisation took its rise. Further we may feel certain that after, for some reason, this pottery ceased to be used in Mesopotamia and the neighbourhood of Susa it was reintroduced into the latter area from the Persian plateau, in a later and more developed form, together with an advanced type of the Lowland ware, by the people who founded the Second Settlement at Susa.

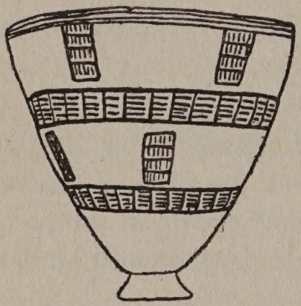


Fig. 8.—Neolithic pot from Persia.

CHAPTER VII

THE INTERPRETATION OF THE EVIDENCE

SUCH is the evidence that we possess as to the occurrence of a Great Flood in Mesopotamia, or, to be more accurate, all the evidence we possessed before the beginning of 1929. It will be well to sum this up, and to endeavour to interpret its meaning, before dealing with the more recent discoveries.

It is clear, from what has been stated, that the suggestion, put forward in 1916 by Sir James Frazer, that the Babylonian story was a legend, an account, somewhat distorted during the course of ages, of a catastrophe that had really occurred, has received ample support by more recent discoveries, such as the Nippur tablets and the Weld-Blundell prism. The archæological evidence, too, as we shall see, is not inconsistent with this interpretation. The close agreement between some details of the Babylonian version and those related in the Book of Genesis, shows us that both accounts are clearly derived from the same source, while the fact that some of the Babylonian documents date from a time, some centuries before Abram set out on his wanderings from Ur of the Chaldees, proves to us that the Babylonian accounts of the catastrophe are by far the older of the two.

We may conclude, therefore, that the Babylonian and Hebrew stories relate to the same event, which really occurred at a time that was already remote when the first documents that we possess were written. We may be satisfied, too, that most other stories of a flood deal with similar events though in other regions, and that these left a deep impression on the minds of the survivors and their descendants, while a few, such as the story of Deucalion, of Manu and the fish, and the tales told in Eastern Turkistan, are myths related to explain certain natural features, such as the dried lake bed of the plain of Thessaly, the origin of the sea or the presence of fossil remains of water animals in an arid and desiccated land.

Our most reliable items of evidence are the lists of kings, two of them dating from before 2000 B.C., while the third, so nearly agreeing with the others, must have been obtained from an equally early source. Yet, although these lists agree in their main features, they differ in minor details, such as the number and names of the kings that ruled the cities of Mesopotamia before the Deluge.

It is clear from these slight divergencies, and from other differences in the passages relating to later times, that these three documents were not copied from one another. They are three independent accounts, perhaps only a few of a larger number that existed and may yet be found, and were the chronicles of the early history of the land set down by temple scribes in various cities. How early such records were first kept is uncertain. Some kind of writing, in a pictographic script, which can at present only be deciphered with difficulty, goes back certainly to the time of the First Dynasty of Kish, the first recorded to have ruled after the Flood, and probably dates from a still earlier time. It is possible, therefore, that writing was known before that catastrophe took place, for, as we have seen, a later tradition mentions written tablets, which were buried for safety during the Deluge. It is possible, however, that the earlier accounts were handed down orally, and, like all stories conveyed by word of mouth, became somewhat varied in the telling. This, and perhaps the errors of copyists after writing had become known, may well account for the variations in the different texts that we possess. The wonder is, rather, that they so closely resemble one another.

One striking feature of the early texts is the inordinate lengths of the reigns of the kings of the early dynasties; these remind us of the great ages of the biblical patriarchs, though Methusaleh would have been but a boy in comparison with some of the antediluvian monarchs and the early kings of Kish. It is not until we come to the First Dynasty of Ur that we come upon reasonable figures, and even there the first king, Mes-anni-padda, is said to have reigned for eighty years, a long time for the founder of a dynasty, who, one would suppose, must have been more than a boy at the time of his accession. For this reason some authorities were inclined to dismiss the earlier parts of these lists as unreliable fables, but the results of archæological research during the last few years have done much to establish their genuine character. Most writers now agree that, except for the number of years that the kings are said to have reigned, they may be considered substantially as history.

The sudden change from enormous to reasonable figures during the early years of the First Dynasty of Ur suggests that it was at this time that the lists were first written down from oral tradition. It may be, however, that it was at this time that the regular cuneiform script, with the numerals as we know them, came into use, and that the earlier pictographic tablets, especially the numbers used on them, were misread or misunderstood. Whatever be the cause, it is clear that we can place no reliance on the figures of the earlier dynasties, and it is possible, too, that the names of some of the kings have suffered corruption.

There is some difference of opinion as to what people inhabited the land during the reigns of these early dynasties. The first people in Mesopotamia, of whom we have any certain knowledge, were the Sumerians, whose language can now be read, and who were ruling many of the cities near the Persian Gulf until they were conquered by the Babylonians shortly after 2000 B.C. There were, however, others in the land, whose speech was Semitic, that is to say closely allied to Hebrew, Phœnician and Arabic. Babylonian was a language of this type, and before Semitic tribes set up a kingdom at Babylon in 2169 B.C., another Semitic tongue, Akkadian, was spoken in the region around Baghdad, a district then known as Akkad. How early these Akkadians entered the plain is uncertain, though we have no sure evidence of them before about 2750 B.C.; it is also disputed whether any still earlier folk of Semitic speech had occupied any part of Mesopotamia.

Now the names of the kings of the First Dynasty of Kish do not resemble those of the later Sumerian monarchs. Some have claimed that they were Semitic, but this is far from clear. Recently Professor Langdon has suggested, on the ground of certain customs indicated by their remains, that they were Elamites, and ancestors of, or allied to, the people of Elam, of which Susa was the chief city. On many grounds this seems a likely hypothesis, and if so they were neither allied to the Semitic folk, who seem to have come from the deserts on the west, or to the Sumerians, whose origin is in dispute, but belong to a totally distinct people, speaking a language unrelated to either, or to any known language except an obscure dialect still spoken in one of the valleys of the Caucasus mountains. If we are right in believing that the Jemdet Nasr pottery, and the wares of the same kind found at Kish, date from the First Dynasty of that city, which is at present far from certain, then the kings of the First Dynasty of Kish, and the people of the Second Settlement at Susa, were, like the later inhabitants of that city, Elamites.

The Sumerian origins present difficulties. Some would bring them from Turkistan, or from some other region in Central Asia, not realising how impassable are the Elburz mountains and the other ranges that intervene between that area and Mesopotamia. A more likely direction in which to seek their home is the Persian Gulf, for one of their most characteristic forms of decoration is work inlaid with pieces of shell, which suggests that their original home was by the sea; in this connection it is well to remember that the modern wood-work inlaid with mother-of-pearl mostly comes from the Island of Bahrein, some way down the Persian Gulf. Further it has been pointed out by some writers that the Sumerian paradise was termed Dilmun, a region famous in later days for its date palms, and which is known to have lain near the shore of the Persian Gulf, though on which side of it is uncertain.

It seems probable, then, that the Sumerians came by sea, landing at the head of the Persian Gulf, and it is almost certain that they were far from uncivilised when they arrived; in fact it is generally believed that when they reached Mesopotamia, they were far more highly civilised than the folk that they found living in that country. Now Berosus tells us a legend of a mysterious monster, called Oannes, half fish and half man, who came out of the sea, and brought learning to the people of Mesopotamia. This name Oannes may, perhaps, be a variant of Ea, the Sea-god of the Sumerians, but at any rate it seems likely that this story is, in part, a legend, telling of the arrival of the Sumerians, with their higher civilisation, at the head of the Persian Gulf. At what date they arrived is also uncertain. The first names of kings of undoubted Sumerian type are those of the monarchs of the First Dynasty of Erech, which succeeded to the First Dynasty of Kish. This may signify that it was during the closing phase of the leadership of Kish that the Sumerians first settled in the land, where ultimately they established their supremacy, and fixed their capital at Erech. On the other hand there are those, and among them Woolley, who would see the Sumerians living in Mesopotamia at a much earlier date.

The archæological evidence has shown us that at a very early date some grain growers from the Persian plateau, making and using pottery, decorated with designs in black paint, and with the Highland civilisation, founded the first village at Susa, settled on the ridge at Tepeh Musyan, and had settlements at Abu Sharain, Tell al-'Ubaid and elsewhere in Mesopotamia. The evidence further shows us that after a time the site of Susa was abandoned and left unoccupied for several centuries, that

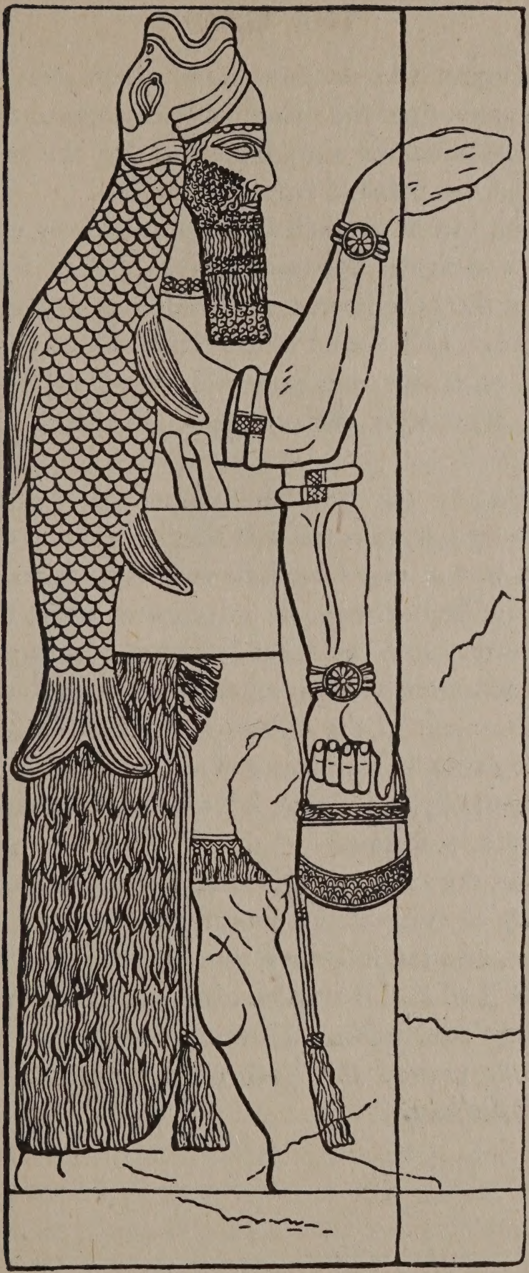


Fig. 9.—Oannes.

Tepeh Musyan was deserted soon afterwards, and that about the same time the painted pottery ceased to be used on the Mesopotamian sites, implying that the people who made it had disappeared from that region.

Later on, but how much later we cannot be sure, there were fresh arrivals, apparently from North Syria, who brought in the polychrome pottery found at Jemdet Nasr and at Kish. That found at the latter site may have been associated with the remains left by the First Dynasty of that city, who were, according to Professor Langdon, Elamites.

According to the traditions embodied in the lists of kings, this dynasty was the first that ruled after the Flood, and if, as was at one time believed, they introduced the Lowland civilisation with its polychrome ware, the earlier painted pottery and the First Settlement at Susa were in the strict sense of the term antediluvian. If this were so, the abandonment of the village at Susa was due to flood and not to drought, and this would accord better with the fact that the people of Tepeh Musyan continued to occupy that site to a later date.

It was an argument of this nature that induced some of us in 1927 to suggest the antediluvian date of this early civilisation, and the following year, after further exploring the site of Tell al-'Ubaid, Mr. Woolley came tentatively to the same conclusion. How this suggestion has been dramatically proved this year must be left to the next chapter to explain.

CHAPTER VIII

RECENT DISCOVERIES AT UR

FOR some years past the University of Pennsylvania and the British Museum have been engaged in exploring the site of Ur, once the home of Abram, where the excavations have been carried out by Mr. Leonard Woolley with marvellous results. It is impossible as it is unnecessary here to describe one tithe of the wonderful things that he has brought to light, and those, who would learn more of those extraordinary discoveries, should read the reports of the excavator in the pages of *The Antiquaries' Journal* and of *Antiquity*.

Beneath the ruins of the buildings that adorned later cities on this site, Woolley found considerable remains of the town that flourished under the Third Dynasty of Ur, which is known with fair accuracy to have ruled there between 2409 and 2301 B.C. Below this were the scanty traces of a few poor and humble dwellings, the date of which could not be ascertained, since there were no inscriptions. Below these again were the remains of another city, belonging to which were a large number of graves. In these graves were rich objects of various kinds, some of them bearing inscriptions, and since some of these bore the name of Mes-anni-padda, especially a seal of lapis lazuli that had belonged to his queen, Nin-Dumu-Nin, it was concluded that the remains of this city and the graves belonging to it dated from the First Dynasty of Ur, for, as we have seen, in the lists of kings Mes-anni-padda's name appears as that of the first monarch of that dynasty.

It was strange that nothing could be met with that could be relegated with certainty to the Second Dynasty, which ruled between the First and the Third. It is, of course, possible that the humble ruins, already mentioned, might belong to that period, but they are hardly worthy of a city, whose monarchs claimed to be the chief rulers of Mesopotamia in their time. It has usually been assumed that all traces of the city of the Second Dynasty were removed in the process of levelling the site for the erection of the third city. This may have been the case, but it is nevertheless surprising that nowhere upon the site has there been found an inscription, which can with any probability be attributed to that period. We have, apparently, the Third City, built upon the ruins of the First City, after an interval, during which the site was abandoned, except for a few humble dwellings.

One of the most surprising, and by far the most magnificent, of Woolley's discoveries was beneath the remains of the First City, for far down below the foundations of its buildings he found that deep pits had been sunk, and subsequently filled in with different materials, and at the bottom of these large pits he found the tombs of great chiefs, kings and queens, by the side of whose burial chambers lay the bones of maid-servants, harpists, men-at-arms and charioteers, who had there been slain to accompany their masters and mistresses to a future world. Near and above these tombs, though not actually in them, were found some tablets, inscribed in a semipictographic script, resembling, though somewhat more developed than, those found at Jemdet Nasr and Kish.

It is no part of our task to describe these wonderful tombs, with their wealth of gold and lapis lazuli, their marvellous works of art and the gruesome remains of the tragic ceremony that formed part of their burial rites. Among them was the tomb of a king, rifled so that the name of the monarch could not be ascertained, another of a queen, Shubad, and a third, containing a skeleton with a marvellous gold helmet or head-piece, which was that of Mes-kalam-dug, believed at the time of its discovery to have been a prince.

Who were the potentates that erected, and ultimately occupied, these great tombs, and who went on their last journey accompanied by chariots drawn by asses, waggons with oxen, and by men-servants, and maid-servants, by harpists and by royal guards? This remains a mystery. The Weld-Blundell prism tells us, as we have seen, that after the Flood there ruled at Kish a dynasty of twenty-three kings, who ruled for 24,510 years, three months and three days. While we may disregard the number of years mentioned in this document, the length of this dynasty's rule must have been considerable, and we may well estimate that it lasted for about 300 years. Then followed the shorter dynasty of Erech, with twelve kings, said to have ruled for 2310 years, but whose duration was probably about 200 years. Then came the First Dynasty of Ur, the first king of which is said to have been Mes-anni-padda.

Now after these early monarchs had been laid to rest in their tombs with these ghastly rites, the deep pits that gave access to them were filled in, and doubtless for a time their sites were held in awe and reverence. When, however, Mes-anni-padda and his successors were ruling at Ur, a number of graves were dug over the spot and in the soil with which the pits had been filled, and many of the subjects of this king had been laid in these graves. There is no mistaking the date of these graves, for the tombs themselves, and more particularly their contents, so clearly resemble those of Mes-anni-padda's queen, and others with inscriptions of this period, that there can be no doubt that they are contemporary. Woolley believes, and with good reason, that a long time, perhaps as much as two or three centuries, must have elapsed before the sites of the older tombs had been forgotten, and before Mes-anni-padda's subjects could have dared to bury in such sacred ground.

Who, then, were these rulers, who had been buried with such savage ritual, some centuries before Mes-anni-padda founded the First Dynasty of Ur? It is clear that, if the views that we have cited are correct, these early chiefs were contemporary with the kings of the First Dynasty of Kish, and, if Woolley's estimate of the interval that elapsed is correct, with some of the earlier kings of that dynasty. Some have thought that they were vice-regents or governors of Ur under the monarchs of Kish. This seemed, at least, a possible solution of the difficulty, and the barbarous rites, so unlike those of the later Sumerians, might have been customary among the ruder Elamites. But the ornaments found in these early tombs seem to be Sumerian, especially a strange object, believed to be a standard, decorated with a series of scenes in shell inlay-work, for such work, as we have seen, appears to be an art typical of Sumerian civilisation. Still it was possible that the inhabitants of Ur, and their civilisation, were Sumerian, in the strict sense of the word, while their rulers, put over them by the kings of Kish, might have been barbarous Elamites. Moreover the prince Mes-kalam-dug, who was clearly a person of importance, was not called a king in his inscriptions.

The last argument has, however, now to be abandoned, for further inscriptions of this chief were discovered early in 1929, and in these he is described as king. The builders of the ancient tombs were clearly monarchs, apparently supreme rulers, and there must have been an independent dynasty at Ur, not mentioned in the lists of kings, ruling contemporarily with the First Dynasty of Kish, and some centuries before Mes-anni-padda founded the First Dynasty of Ur.

There is, however, another difficulty. It has been shown that these ancient tombs were built at the bottom of great pits, sunk in one case as much as twenty-four feet below the surface of the ground as it was at the time that they were made. These pits, however, were not dug into natural soil, but into layers full of broken pottery. Further investigation of these layers shows that they were made up entirely of the rubbish, mostly broken pottery, cast outside the city wall, and falling into definitely stratified layers, not horizontal but inclined at a steep angle, as such rubbish tends to fall and lie on the edge of a great "dump." An immense depth of such rubbish was laid bare in emptying out the approaches to the tombs, and an unknown depth lay below. If these tombs were the work of kings who ruled at Ur during the time of the earlier kings of the First Dynasty of Kish, when did the folk live who cast this immense heap of rubbish and broken pottery over the city wall? Ancient folk seem to have accumulated rubbish more rapidly than we do today, and excavators are at first surprised with the size of the rubbish heaps accumulated during the time of the Roman Empire, especially in Egypt and other countries in the Near East. The rubbish pits outside Cairo, representing the material drawn out of that city during its periodic cleansings, from the Middle Ages to the time of the Mamelukes, are also of considerable height and extend over several miles. Still the city of Ur in the days following the Flood must have been little more than a village, and pottery can not have been so cheap or so abundant as it was during the time of mass production under the Roman Empire, so that a heap of rubbish, as wide and as deep as that into which these early tombs had been dug, must have taken a very long time in which to accumulate.

It might be thought, from all that has been said, that this rubbish must have been cast over the city wall in still earlier days, not only long before the reigns of the early monarchs buried in its depths, but before the rise of the First Dynasty of Kish. In fact that it was antediluvian. On the other hand, the pottery fragments, though they have not yet received the detailed study that they deserve, are, we are assured by Woolley, of that plain unpainted type that we have learned to associate with Sumerian civilisation, and that among them were no fragments of that thin ware, of buff material decorated in black paint, that we find scattered on so many sites in Elam and throughout Mesopotamia, and suspect to represent the pottery in use over the plain before the Flood.

The subject, as the reader will have seen already, bristles with difficulties, and no really satisfactory explanation has yet been advanced. One theory, very hazardous and rash he must admit, has occurred to the author, and, such as it is, it is here advanced as a possible solution of the problem.

We have seen that the lists of kings mention several dynasties ruling at Ur, with intervals of considerable length, when the chief power lay in other cities. Here we need only concern ourselves with the first three. After the fall of the First Dynasty of Erech, which succeeded the First Dynasty of Kish, Mes-anni-padda is said to have founded the First Dynasty of Ur. There were four kings of this dynasty, Mes-anni-padda, Meskem-Nannar, Elulu and Balulu. Then, after four other dynasties had ruled, lasting according to the lists about 4331 years, which may well be 280 years or even less, there arose the Second Dynasty of Ur, which also had four kings. Unfortunately the Weld-Blundell prism is defective at this point, and in the Nippur tablet, while the dynasty is mentioned, it has only been possible to decipher the last syllable of the name of the last king, which reads *lu*, identical, it will be noticed, with the last syllable of the name of the last king of the First Dynasty. Again, according to the lists, ten dynasties ruled at other cities for 1278 years, which may in reality be a somewhat shorter period if we believe that there was some overlapping, and then came the Third Dynasty of Ur, the date of which, it is agreed, was somewhere about 2409 to 2301 B.C.

It will be remembered that on the site of Ur Woolley has found undoubted remains of the city built and occupied by its Third Dynasty. Some way below this, thus showing that a considerable interval had elapsed between the two periods of occupation, was another city, which, as inscriptions show, was the city of Mes-anni-padda and his successors. Below that again, and dating from a period some three centuries earlier, were the great pit-tombs with their gruesome remains, belonging to monarchs, one of whom was Queen Shubad and the other King Mes-kalam-dug. These tombs had been dug into a heap of pottery, that must have taken four centuries or more to accumulate.

If we had not discovered any inscriptions relating to Mes-anni-padda, or if we had not found his name entered in the lists as the first king of the First Dynasty, we should unhesitatingly have interpreted the archæological evidence differently. We should have assumed with complete satisfaction that the heap of rubbish and potsherds had been cast over the city walls during the rules of the First Dynasty of Kish and the First Dynasty of Erech, and that Mes-kalam-dug was one of the kings of the First Dynasty of Ur, and that Queen Shubad was the consort of another. Then, after the interval we have been led to expect from the lists, we should have identified the remains, now considered as those of the First Dynasty, as those of the Second, and considered Mes-anni-padda, if we found his name, as a monarch of that dynasty. The Third Dynasty remains would thus fall into their proper place, and we should have had no difficulty in accounting for the absence of those of the Second.

The name of Mes-anni-padda, however, occurring as it does in the kings' lists and in the graves at Ur, as well as in the inscription of his son A-anni-padda at Tell al-'Ubaid, stands in the way of this rational interpretation of the archæological evidence. It is a hazardous adventure to disturb this identification, which, when made by Woolley at Tell al-'Ubaid in 1923, first established on a historical basis the First Dynasty of Ur, which up till then had been considered as mythical.

Nevertheless the claims of archæology are as great as those of history, and its evidence is in some ways more reliable. Written documents may be biased, and sometimes false, and we have always to allow for the mistakes of copyists; potsherds, it has been said, cannot lie. We have already seen reason to believe that the scribes at Larsa and Nippur, who were responsible for the tablets that we possess, as well as Berosus in much later days, had copied their chronicles from earlier documents, and we have no reason for believing that the earliest versions at their disposal were original or contemporary accounts of the earlier dynasties. These lists, or the earlier sections of them, must have been copied and recopied time after time, and it would be surprising if no mistakes had been made. In fact, we have already suggested that in the lengths of the reigns of the earlier monarchs such errors had crept in at a remote date. It is also worth remembering that, though the First Dynasty of Ur is the earliest in which the kings have been allotted reigns of reasonable lengths, we do not again meet with reliable figures until we reach the Second Dynasty of the same city. This, too, rather suggests that the account of Mes-anni-padda's dynasty, with its reasonable figures, has been wrongly interpolated in the midst of a series where the figures are impossible.

It seems, therefore, justifiable to suggest the possibility that one of these earlier scribes, while copying from another document the lists of the kings of the dynasties long gone by, had made some confusion between the kings of the First and Second Dynasties of Ur. Both were short dynasties, both had four kings, and the total lengths of their reigns were nearly the same. It may be that the names of the kings of the Second Dynasty were written down in both places, and the fact that the last syllable of the name of the last king in both is identical is in favour of this explanation. Again it may have been the case that Mes-anni-padda was the first king of the Second Dynasty, while the first monarch of the First Dynasty was Mes-kalam-dug, and that the copyist confused the two names, both having the same initial syllable, and wrote Mes-anni-padda in both places.

What was the true explanation it is impossible to say, nor is it likely that we shall know more until we can find a list in which the names of the kings of the Second Dynasty are clearly inscribed, or those of the First Dynasty free from this error, if it be one. It seems worth while, however, to consider the possibility of some such error having arisen, since if this be admitted the successive layers found at Ur can be rationally interpreted.

A further difficulty, that of chronology, would likewise be cleared up. If we take the kings' lists at their face value, and assume, as the lists would have us do, that each dynasty came into power at the fall of its predecessor, we should have to place the First Dynasty of Ur in some century closely following 4000 B.C. It is impossible, with the information at our disposal, to be more precise, since some of the figures are missing, while a few others are clearly impossible. Still, taking the uncertain reigns at an average length, and allowing for no over-lapping, we should find that the accession of the First Dynasty would be before 3750 B.C.

It has been pointed out, however, that the style of the art and the type of the cuneiform script belonging to the so-called First Dynasty of Ur very closely resemble those from the mound of Telloh, the ancient Lagash, excavated some years ago by French explorers. Now the earliest remains from Telloh, though they cannot be dated with precision, since none of the rulers of Lagash are mentioned in the kings' lists, must date from about 3100, or perhaps as early as 3200 B.C. These are the dates now generally accepted for the dynasty of Mes-anni-padda, and would suit very well for the Second Dynasty of Ur, if we accepted the kings' lists at their face value. Some have argued that the changes visible in Sumerian art at some periods are singularly slight, and Sidney Smith has pointed out that the differences in the handwriting of various individuals or places are often greater than those noted between others some centuries apart. Nevertheless it is fashionable at present to accept the latest possible date for the so-called First Dynasty of Ur, and it has been customary to postulate so much over-lapping, and so many contemporary dynasties, that the dates have been shortened by six or seven hundred years.

In spite of the direct statements to the contrary contained in the text of the Weld-Blundell prism, it is difficult to believe that no over-lapping occurred, for there are one or two passages that can only be interpreted reasonably if we allow for something of the kind. When, however, we make most of these dynasties contemporary, as some writers have done, merely to fit in with our preconceived notions of the date of what we believe to be the

First Dynasty of Ur, we are doing more violence to the text of our only early history of the country than we should be doing if we assumed that a slight error, such as has been suggested, had been made by a copyist.

It is doubtless rash to suggest such an emendation of our earliest text, especially as it relates to a very famous passage, none less than the statement upon which Woolley so cleverly dated the remains of that wonderful temple of Nin-Khursag, that he excavated at Tell al-'Ubaid, the very passage, too, that in the opinion of most students converted the early parts of this record from myth, or at any rate legend, into sober history. Nevertheless, if this small emendation be accepted, the wonderful discoveries, found by Woolley at Ur, can be reasonably interpreted, and a chronology can be adopted, which does no other violence to our earliest text.

CHAPTER IX

THE LATEST DISCOVERIES

THE preceding chapters have summed up the state of knowledge on the subject of the Deluge as it stood in the early months of 1929. It was clear that there had been a Great Flood in Mesopotamia, which had left a deep impression on the minds of the people of that country, and which had become an episode in a favourite epic, relating the adventures of a national hero, Gilgamesh; from this epic had been derived the story, related in the Book of Genesis, which is familiar to all our readers. Further we have seen that this flood preceded the First Dynasty to rule in the city of Kish, that there were monarchs ruling in other cities in Mesopotamia before the catastrophe, one of whom, Xisuthros, king of Shuruppak, is said to have escaped from the flood in a boat. Lastly we have suspected that a fine painted pottery ware, found at Tell al-'Ubaid, Abu Sharain and elsewhere, as well as in the First Settlement at Susa, dated from before this event. From all this evidence it seemed clear that The Flood was a historical episode, but positive evidence of its existence was lacking.

It was on March 16th, 1929, that a communication appeared in *The Times* from Woolley, announcing a remarkable discovery. He pointed out that the shafts of the graves, containing the royal tombs with their attendant dead, had been " dug down into soil entirely composed of house refuse, decayed brick, wood-ash, broken pottery and such like ;" and that this accumulation of rubbish was " divided into very clearly marked strata of different colours". "Near the surface", he continued, " these strata slope gently down from north-west to south-east, but the deeper one digs and the more one digs towards the north-west the more pronounced is the slope, until the bands of red and grey and black run at an angle of nearly 45 deg." At the south-eastern end, however, of the excavation the strata were found suddenly to flatten out to a horizontal position, and the remains were found lying flat at the bottom of smooth water-laid mud.

It was clear from this that the cemetery containing these early graves had occupied an area outside the limits of the city as it then was, sloping from its wall down to what Woolley thought was the bed of a canal or water-course. His interpretation was that the city had been erected upon a small, low island in the marshy delta of the Euphrates, and that this island had been enlarged by the heaps of rubbish cast away over the city walls; the extension thus formed had in later centuries been used as a cemetery, in which had been erected the great vaulted tombs at the bottom of deep shafts sunk through the heap of refuse.

Into this rubbish pile Woolley caused a deep shaft to be sunk. It passed through many layers of pottery, all of the same unpainted type, showing that during the centuries through which the enormous mass of rubbish had been accumulating no important change or break in civilisation had occurred. At last, when the workmen had dug down to the level of the surrounding plain, they reached a clean water-laid clay, containing no fragments of pottery, or any foreign substance except a piece of the fossilised bone of some animal. The workmen believed that they had reached the bottom, and that this was virgin soil, but Woolley was not satisfied that this was so. The pit was carried down deeper, through eight feet of solid, clean and unstratified clay, and below this he found a stratum, rich in flint chips and cores, and quantities of pottery fragments, some like the plain types found above, while the majority were of painted ware, exactly like that already found at Tell al-'Ubaid. Still deeper he sunk the shaft, finding more pottery, some plain and some painted, then fragments of a new painted ware not met with before, and at the very bottom a burnt brick of a totally new type. Lastly, when they had dug down to a few feet above the present level of the Persian Gulf, they came to the clean river silt of the original island, and were satisfied that they had reached virgin soil. Here, it appeared, was direct proof of the existence of The Flood, and that the painted ware, as had been suspected, was of antediluvian date.

Scarcely had the announcement been made that direct evidence of The Flood had been obtained at Ur, when news came that this discovery had already been made on the site of Kish. Two days later, on March 18th, in a communication to *The Times*, Professor Langdon made known that the excavators at Kish had found evidence of The Flood, in a layer which he was inclined to date at about 3400 B.C.; more than that they had found two thin deposits, lying at a considerably greater depth, both of which seemed to have been laid down by floods, which he dated tentatively at 4000 and 4200 B.C. This he explained more fully in a letter, published the same day in the *Daily Telegraph.* The nature of the deposits at Kish was complicated, and it was not easy from these communications to obtain a clear idea of their interpretation. Read in conjunction with a letter that had appeared in *The Times* on January 4th and one communicated by Professor Sollas to the *Daily Telegraph* on June 5th, as well as with a letter to *The Times* of July 17th by Mr. Henry Field, with comments by Professor Langdon, it is possible to form a fairly clear idea of the order of these deposits and the nature of their contents. In order to enable me to make a fuller and more accurate statement, Langdon has very kindly supplied me with still further details and a few corrections, so that the following account may be considered as a reliable description of what has been found up to the present. It is in substantial agreement with the brief account published in *l'Anthropologie* XXXIX (1929), p. 65, from the pen of M. L.-Ch. Watelin, Director of the excavations.

On the eastern part of the site of Kish, the area known in ancient days as Hursagkalama, the following deposits were met with, beginning at the top. First M. Watelin, the excavator, found fifteen feet of soil (A) containing Neo-Babylonian remains, dating from 1169 to 539 B.C., and below this ten feet six inches (B) with relics of the Kassite period (1670-1170 B.C.), the time of Hammurabi (2067-2024 B.C.) and of the age of the Sargonids (2697-2571 B.C.), or descendants of Sargon of Agade. Below this was a bed (C), known as the 'red stratum', six feet six inches thick, containing remains of a Sumerian temple, on a platform built of plano-convex bricks. In this layer

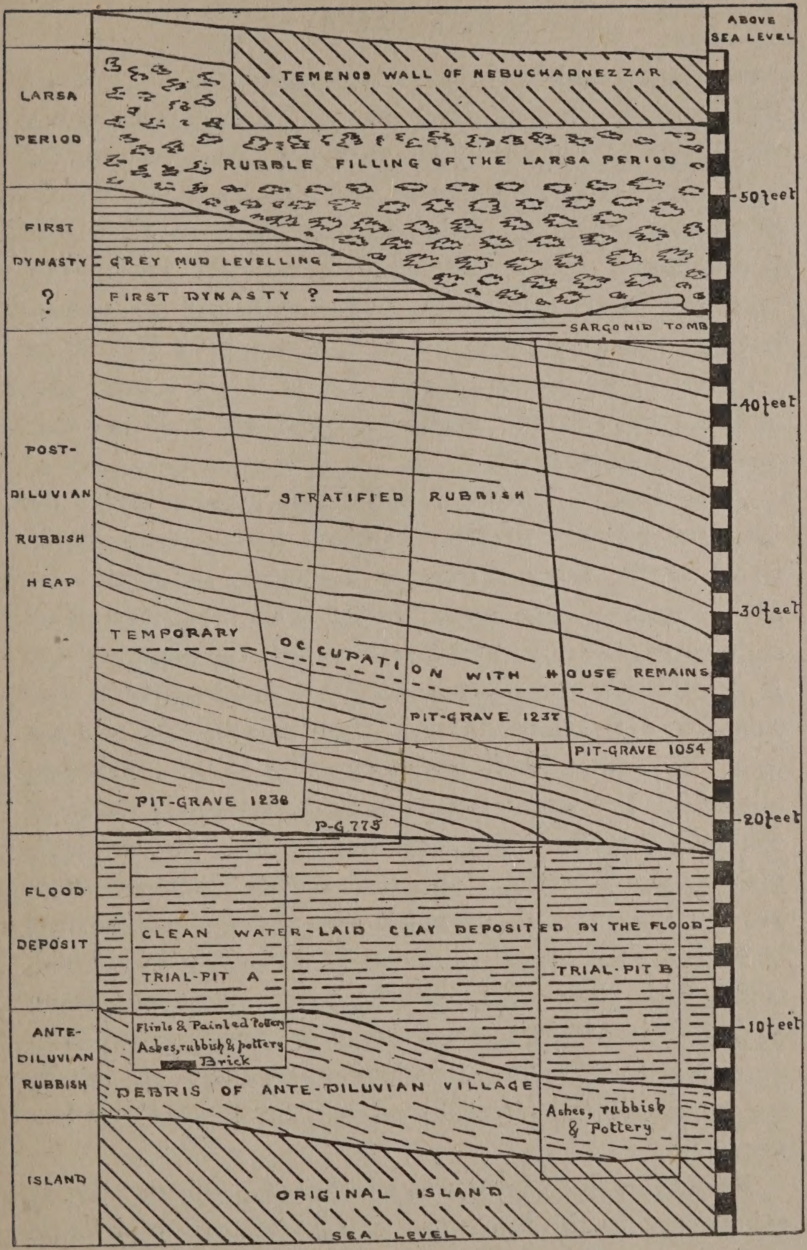

ABOVE SEA LEVEL
LARSA PERIOD
TEMENOS WALL OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR
RUBBLE FILLING OF THE LARSA PERIOD
50 feet
FIRST DYNASTY ?
GREY MUD LEVELLING
FIRST DYNASTY ?
SARGONID TOMB
40 feet
POST-DILUVIAN RUBBISH HEAP
STRATIFIED RUBBISH
30 feet
TEMPORARY OCCUPATION WITH HOUSE REMAINS
PIT-GRAVE 1237
PIT-GRAVE 1054
PIT-GRAVE 1236
P-G 775
20 feet
FLOOD DEPOSIT
CLEAN WATER-LAID CLAY DEPOSITED BY THE FLOOD
TRIAL-PIT A
TRIAL-PIT B
10 feet
ANTE-DILUVIAN RUBBISH
Flints & Painted Pottery
Ashes, rubbish & pottery
Brick
DEBRIS OF ANTE-DILUVIAN VILLAGE
Ashes, rubbish & Pottery
ISLAND
ORIGINAL ISLAND
SEA LEVEL

FIG. 10.—Section of the deposits at Ur.
Based on a section by Mr. C. L. Woolley, published in
The Antiquaries' Journal, Oct. 1929.

were found tablets, in a script resembling those from Telloh of the time of Ur-Nina, who was patesi or chief magistrate of Lagash about 3000 B.C., and very similar to those from Ur, found with the remains of the dynasty of Mes-anni-padda. This layer, or the lower part of it, is considered to date from about 3200 B.C. The bottom of this red stratum (C) lies two feet below the present level of the plain, which now lies about 75 feet above the level of the Persian Gulf. Below this is a layer (D), one foot six inches in thickness, which was evidently laid down by a great flood.

According to Professor Sollas this layer contains the fossilised remains of river fish and a number of fresh-water shells, while Professor Langdon states that no human remains have been found in it, and that it stretches right across the city of Kish and out into the plain beyond. It is evidently the deposit left by a flood of some considerable dimensions, though, since this deposit was not found at Jemdet Nasr, seventeen miles to the north-east, but which lies about twenty-three feet higher, we must conclude that the inundation was confined to the flood-plain of the Euphrates and that at this point the water did not rise more than twenty feet above the then level of Kish. This deposit was clearly laid down by a flood, which took place some centuries before 3200 B.C., about 3400 B.C. according to Langdon, or a century or two later according to Watelin, but whether this layer was left by the waters of the Great Flood remains for the moment uncertain.

Below this flood layer was another (E), thirteen feet in thickness. In the lower part of this stratum were found the remains of brick buildings, which had been abandoned and silted up for many feet before the layer was dug into for the purpose of erecting brick tombs, which contained burials, some with chariots, and in many ways resembling the pit graves at Ur, excavated deep in the refuse heap of that city. This layer, then, represents two periods, the earlier when buildings were erected near its base, the later when, after these buildings had silted up, shafts were sunk in it for the great tombs. Both periods had come to an end before the deposition of the flood layer, which is found extending unbroken over the whole site. In this layer were found a number of objects of copper, silver and gold, stone bowls and a quantity of plain unpainted pottery. At its base was a thin deposit, only a few inches in thickness, which had clearly been laid down by a flood, which Langdon dates tentatively at about 4000 B.C.

Below this thin flood layer came another (F), three feet in thickness. In this there were foundations of buildings, paved streets as well as flint implements, stone vessels and a large number of beaker-shaped pots, all unpainted. No copper or metal of any kind was found in this layer. At the bottom of this, exactly on the present water level, was another thin layer of mud, deposited by a flood, which Langdon dates provisionally about 4200 B.C.

Underneath this lowest flood layer came a deposit (G), one foot six inches in thickness. In this was a quantity of fragments of painted pottery, not the buff ware of the Highland civilisation decorated with black designs found at Ur and Tell al-'Ubaid, but polychrome ware of the Lowland civilisation like that discovered at Jemdet Nasr. Sollas says that some copper was found in this layer.

Lastly, below the painted pottery layer, came another

(H), eight feet in thickness, containing what are called neolithic remains. Here no metal has been found, but a quantity of flint implements, fragments of black polished pottery, of a red ware, and of an unpainted ware decorated with stamped lines. At the base of this layer the excavators came to virgin soil.

The interpretation of the evidence laid open on these two sites presents considerable difficulty. Either of the sites, if taken by itself, could easily be explained. At Kish the mud laid down in layer D is of such thickness and extent that it might well have been deposited by the Great Flood, from which Xisuthros, Uta-Napishtim or Noah, by whichever name we call him, escaped in a boat or ark, and it has been claimed as such by Professors Langdon and Sollas. It is dated by the former as having taken place about or just before 3400 B.C., and in his recent work on the Venus tablets he has striven to demonstrate that Ga-ur, the first king of the First Dynasty of Kish, can easily be placed at as late a date as this. In doing so, however, he has been compelled to postulate that four dynasties were ruling at the same time in different cities in Mesopotamia. Layer D, however, overlies without a break the thick layer E, in which were sunk the great tombs with the chariot burials. If we accept Langdon's interpretation, we must relegate these chariot burials to antediluvian times.

At Ur Woolley claims, with a good show of reason, that the eight feet of solid clay that he has laid bare was deposited by the Great Flood, and cites in support of this view that beneath this layer were found large quantities of painted ware, which does not occur higher up on this site. The sudden and complete disappearance of this

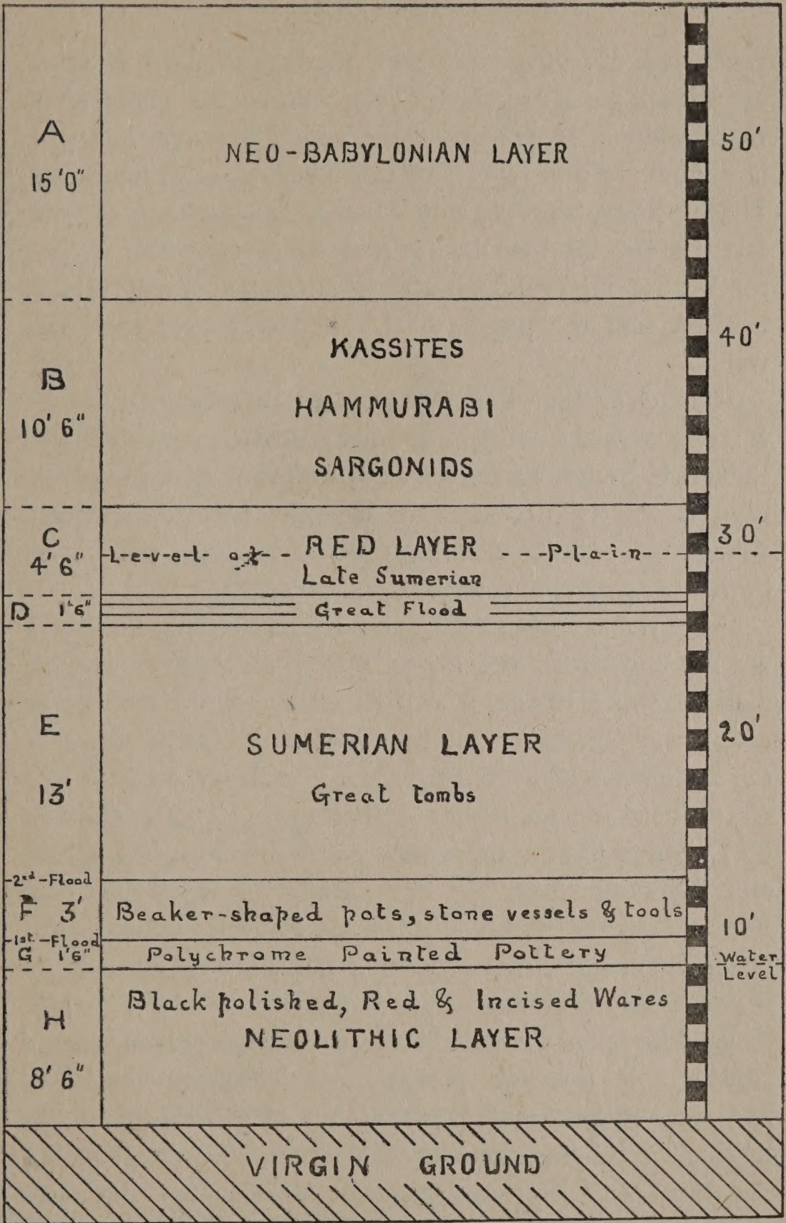

A
15'0"
NEO-BABYLONIAN LAYER
50'
B
10' 6"
KASSITES
HAMMURABI
SARGONIDS
40'
C
4' 6"
level of
RED LAYER
plain
Late Sumerian
30'
D 1'6"
Great Flood
E
13'
SUMERIAN LAYER
Great tombs
20'
2nd Flood
F 3'
Beaker-shaped pots, stone vessels & tools
10'
1st Flood
G 1'6"
Polychrome Painted Pottery
Water Level
H
8' 6"
Black polished, Red & Incised Wares
NEOLITHIC LAYER
VIRGIN GROUND

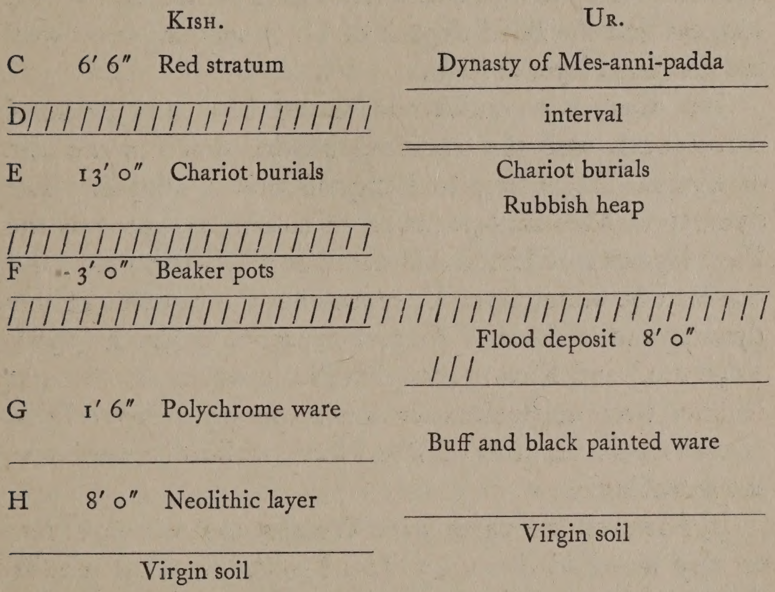
Fig. 11.—Section of the deposits at Kish.

ware and of the people who made and used it must, so Woolley argues, have been caused by some great catastrophe that destroyed the whole population, and it is difficult to find fault with this conclusion. The mud at Ur, however, was laid down before the shafts were sunk for the chariot burials, in fact some centuries earlier, for in the interval had accumulated that great pile of rubbish that the people of Ur had cast over their city wall.

It is clear that both these interpretations cannot be correct, and the subject requires further consideration. Before, however, we can make any attempt at an explanation, it will be necessary to examine the two sections, side by side, and to determine which layers or periods on both sites correspond with one another.

Since the section at Kish is relatively simple and horizontal, and since the layers found here have received distinguishing letters, it will be clearer if we attempt to define the periods found by Woolley at Ur in terms of the layers at Kish. We may begin with layer C, the red stratum six feet six inches in thickness. This is claimed by Langdon to be contemporary with Ur-Nina at Lagash, and the same claim has been made for the dynasty of Mes-anni-padda at Ur. We may, I think, assume, provisionally at least, that these two items are approximately if not exactly contemporary.

Woolley has postulated, and with good reason, that a considerable interval, perhaps two or three centuries, had elapsed between the filling up of the shafts of the tombs, containing the chariot burials, and the time of the dynasty of Mes-anni-padda. At Kish we have only the flood deposit, layer D, and perhaps a small section of the upper part of layer E to correspond to this interval. It is possible, however, and indeed probable, that the lower part of layer C may date from a rather earlier time than the accession of Mes-anni-padda. Then come the great tombs, sunk in the rubbish heap at Ur and in layer E at Kish. These clearly belong to the same civilisation, and all feel that they must be contemporary.


Kish.
Ur.
C 6′ 6″ Red stratum
Dynasty of Mes-anni-padda
D
interval
E 13′ 0″ Chariot burials
Chariot burials
Rubbish heap
F - 3′ 0″ Beaker pots
Flood deposit 8′ 0″
G 1′ 6″ Polychrome ware
Buff and black painted ware
H 8′ 0″ Neolithic layer
Virgin soil
Virgin soil

We now come to the rubbish heap itself, which must have taken a very long time to accumulate. This might be contemporary with the greater part of layer E, into which the chariot tombs had been sunk, but there is much to be said for the view that the rubbish heap was growing, not only through this period, but also while the three feet of layer F were being deposited. If this were so, the second of the floods at Kish occurred after the rubbish heap had begun to grow, but probably before its completion.

Below the rubbish heap was found the eight feet of clay, that Woolley attributes to The Flood, and below layer F was the thin alluvial layer deposited by the first flood at Kish. Below both was a quantity of painted pottery, buff with black decoration at Ur and polychrome at Kish. In spite of the difference in these wares, I would suggest that the flood deposit of Ur is contemporary with the first flood layer at Kish.

We must now endeavour to see how this evidence corresponds with the traditions handed down in the lists of kings. According to Langdon this is simple. The dynasty of Mes-anni-padda is, of course, accepted as the First Dynasty of Ur, and is dated at 3150-3000 B.C., and the Red Stratum, layer C, represents the remains of this dynasty and of those of the first dynasties of Erech (3300-3150 B.C.) and Kish (3400-3170 B.C.), which are thought to have been approximately contemporary. Layer D is, of course, the remains of The Flood, while all lower layers are antediluvian.

If, however, we agree with Woolley that his eight feet of clay was laid down by The Flood, we must modify this view in one of two ways. Accepting the orthodox view that the dynasty of Mes-anni-padda was in reality the First Dynasty of Ur, we must consider the interval postulated by Woolley as corresponding to the First Dynasty of Erech or the latter part of it. The chariot burials will be contemporary with the First Dynasty of Kish, or the last half of it, overlapping, perhaps, the earlier part of the First Dynasty of Erech, while the rubbish mound must date from the time of the earlier kings of the First Dynasty of Kish. If Woolley is right in postulating two or three hundred years for the interval, it will not be easy to get all these items into the duration of these two dynasties, which cannot have exceeded five hundred years ; it is, however, just possible.

If, on the other hand, we accept the suggestion, made tentatively in Chapter VII, that there has been a copyist's error in the Weld-Blundell prism, we shall interpret the deposits differently. In this case the dynasty of Mes-anni-padda will be the Second Dynasty of Ur, dated according to different authorities 3295-3187 B.C. or about 3000-2900 B.C. The interval that elapsed between the closing of the great tombs with the chariot burials and the accession of Mes-anni-padda, that is to say between the downfall of the First and the rise of the Second Dynasty of Ur, will, according to the system of chronology that I am advocating, have been from about 3575 B.C. until about 3295 B.C., that is to say an interval of about 280 years, which agrees very well with the 200 to 300 years postulated by Woolley. The Red Stratum (C) at Kish began to be laid down after 3575 B.C., according to Langdon about 3400 B.C., though it may well have begun as early as, or even before, 3500 B.C., when, according to my system of chronology, the Second Dynasty began to reign at Kish. If, however, we accept M. Watelin's date, this flood will have accounted for the fall of that dynasty about 3320 B.C., one of these, then, is the date of the flood that deposited stratum D at Kish.

The chariot burials would, as we have seen, date from between 3752 and 3575 B.C., and before that was deposited the great rubbish heap at Ur, the lowest layers of stratum E and the whole of stratum F at Kish. If the scheme that I am suggesting is correct, these deposits will have been laid down during the rule of the First Dynasty of Erech, which I have dated at about 3950-3752 B.C., which will account for the lower part of stratum E, and during the First Dynasty of Kish, 4250-3950 B.C., to which I attribute layer F. According to this scheme of chronology, which I put forward in 1927, we should date the second flood at Kish at 3950 B.C., and the first flood at 4250 B.C., while Langdon, on entirely different evidence, has calculated that they took place about 4000 B.C. and 4200 B.C. respectively.

It will be thus seen that the reconstruction that I am proposing explains better than either of the others the evidence that we have obtained from the recent explorations at Ur and Kish. The agreement is, in fact, surprising, especially since the dates of the rise and fall of the First Dynasty of Kish, as suggested by me in 1927, agree within fifty years in each case with those put forward this year by Langdon for the two earlier floods at Kish, the deposits of which lie above and below stratum F.

Let me now describe briefly in their proper order the events that took place in Mesopotamia as I conceive them to have occurred. At a very early date, Langdon suggests about 5000 B.C., and it may well be a trifle earlier, a settlement was made at Kish. We have no means of knowing who were the people that formed it, but as three distinct types of pottery, polished black, red and stamped wares, were used, it is quite possible that during the many centuries, through which the eight feet of layer H were being deposited, at least three different sets of people formed part of the population. When we know more about the shapes of the stamped pots, we may possibly be able to make some suggestions as to their affinities, for in Egypt Brunton has found incised tulip-shaped beakers among the remains of the Badarian civilisation, or rather among the remains of an earlier phase of this culture that he has termed Tasian. Since the Badarian civilisation preceded in Egypt the earliest predynastic, which is believed by some to have begun about 4900 B.C., we may reasonably date the Badarian about 5000 B.C. and the Tasian phase a trifle earlier. The earliest pottery, then, hitherto discovered in Egypt and Mesopotamia go back to approximately the same date, though it is impossible as yet to state which of the two has the priority.

Mr. Henry Field has suggested that these early settlers at Kish, who were living in a neolithic state, were the descendants of some epipalæolithic hunters, whose implements he had found in quantities on the surface of the Syrian Desert. While it is quite possible that some of these hunters may have settled in the village at Kish, and formed an element in its mixed population, it seems improbable that hunting tribes from an almost waterless desert would suddenly have settled by the river side and, without help from others, have made such excellent pottery. If these hunting tribes were indeed the only ancestors of the neolithic inhabitants of Kish, we must conclude that they had served some apprenticeship in the potter's art elsewhere before reaching this site.

About the same time there were people on the Iranian plateau, living in a neolithic state and using pottery of a buff material decorated with black painted lines, remains of which have been discovered recently by Dr. Herzfeld. About 5000 B.C., or soon after, some of these people with the Highland civilisation settled by the River Kerkha and founded the First Settlement at Susa, by which time they had become acquainted with copper, while others settled at Tepeh Musyan on a ridge near by. These people have been called proto-Elamites. Soon some of them passed down to the Persian Gulf, where their remains have been found at Bender Bushire, and not long afterwards, as the discoveries at Eridu, Ur, Tell al-'Ubaid and a host of other sites show, these proto-Elamites became dwellers in Mesopotamia. For some reason, however, they did not settle at Kish, which was already occupied by other folk.

It was much later, I am inclined to think about 4400 or 4300 B.C., that another group, coming this time from North Syria, who had developed a polychrome ware, arrived in Mesopotamia with the Lowland civilisation and settled at Jemdet Nasr, and soon afterwards took possession of the settlement at Kish.

About the same time, it would appear, a group of Sumerians, coming from somewhere on the shores of the Persian Gulf, landed at the mouths of the Tigris and Euphrates, bringing with them the first germs of the art of writing. That the Sumerians arrived about this time has recently been postulated by Woolley, on rather slender evidence so far as it has yet appeared, but their presence in Mesopotamia is more definitely established by the pictographic tablets found at Jemdet Nasr, in association with the polychrome pottery; on these, which Professor Langdon has deciphered, he has found a number of undoubted Sumerian words. Both types of people, with the Highland and the Lowland civilisations, and doubtless also the earlier people at Kish, lived in reed huts by the river's bank. The Sumerians, on the other hand, so Woolley believes, had begun to erect cities, built of burnt brick on raised mounds some feet above the water level.

Then came The Flood, about 4250 or 4200 B.C. This destroyed the villages and reed huts of the earlier people, and drowned all their inhabitants, except the headman of the village of Shuruppak and his family. This man, Xisuthros, Uta-Napishtim or Noah, had been warned, so Woolley thinks, by a friendly Sumerian, and had built a boat, in which he and his companions escaped the ruin that befell all their kindred.

The whole valley was now free for the Sumerians, who had escaped destruction by taking refuge in their elevated cities, protected as they were by brick walls. These people soon took possession of the whole land, and it was some of them, we may suspect, who drove away the people of Jemdet Nasr, whose dwellings had been above the level of the waters, and burned their village.

After the Flood came the First Dynasty of Kish, during whose rule layer F, with the beaker-shaped pots, was laid down. The kings of this dynasty seem, for the most part, not to have been Sumerians, but whence they came is uncertain. During their rule there were Sumerians at Ur, who threw their refuse over the city wall and began that pile of rubbish that Woolley has found there.

Then about 4000 or 3950 B.C. there was another flood, evidence for which at Ur has not been cited by Woolley. He has, however, described a bed of smooth water-laid mud at the south-eastern end of the rubbish heap, overlying some of the rubbish. This mud Woolley attributed to a canal or water-course; it may, however, have been laid down by this or the subsequent flood.

After the second flood came the First Dynasty of Erech, during which was laid down the lower part of stratum E at Kish, and the upper part of the rubbish heap at Ur. This dynasty was succeeded in 3752 B.C. by the First Dynasty of Ur, one of the kings of which was Mes-kalam-dug, while Queen Shubad was the consort of another. These were the kings buried with gruesome rites, in tombs built at the bottom of shafts dug through the rubbish heap, with their chariots and attendants, and it seems likely that it was their vice-regents, who were responsible for the chariot burials in stratum E at Kish.

Then soon after the close of this dynasty in 3575 B.C., possibly just before 3500 B.C. when the Second Dynasty of Kish arose to power, though Langdon would say 3400 B.C., came the flood at Kish, that laid down stratum D, though according to Watelin it was a century or two later, and after an interval, during which the lower part of stratum C was laid down, Mes-anni-padda founded the Second Dynasty of Ur about 3295 B.C.

CHAPTER X

The Cause of the Flood

Little space remains in which to discuss the cause of The Flood, but it will be sufficient for our purpose. It has been suggested that a sudden rise in the sea level inundated the lower reaches of Mesopotamia, and there is nothing, at first sight, improbable in this hypothesis. Considerable changes in the respective levels of land and sea have taken place since man first occupied this planet, and, apparently, are taking place today, and the lower part of Mesopotamia lies at so low an altitude that a rise of thirty feet would flood a very considerable area. These changes, however, are usually gradual, and such a slow rise of the waters would not take the inhabitants by surprise and so cause widespread destruction. Moreover the clay found by Woolley at Ur contained no evidence that it had been laid down by the sea, while the deposits at Kish were evidently of freshwater origin. This suggestion must, therefore, be abandoned.

A few years ago I hazarded the opinion that The Flood was not a single event, but a succession of annual spring inundations that made the cultivation of the alluvial flats impossible, and so compelled the inhabitants to abandon the valley. This series of floods I attributed to the greater snow-fall on the Armenian mountains, in which the Euphrates rises, during that period of renewed cold, a minor glacial phase, known as the Gschnitz, which is usually dated about 4500 B.C. The clay layer at Ur, which Woolley quite rightly attributes to The Flood, was found to be solid and unstratified, and so must have been deposited in one season, and the flood layers at Kish tell the same story. In the light of this fresh evidence this explanation must be withdrawn.

In his letter to the *Daily Telegraph*, Professor Sollas has made the following suggestion. "A slowly moving cyclonic disturbance brought with it an unusually heavy and persistent fall of rain, and it lasted, according to the Sumerian legend, for seven days. This would have been in the rainy season, when warm rains in the Taurus assisted the melting of its snows and the Euphrates, swollen beyond measure, burst its banks." It seems likely that it was from the Armenian mountains, rather than the Taurus, that the bulk of the water from the melted snow was derived, and this may have been increased in volume and suddenness by the breaking of an ice dam in the upper reaches of the river, such as occurred in August 1929 in the valley of the Shyok, one of the tributaries of the Indus. It is unlikely that, at so early a date, the Euphrates, in its passage through the plain, had been hemmed in by artificial banks. With these qualifications, Sollas's explanation seems to fit the case in the light of the recent discoveries.

The Flood, then, was one of those normal inundations, which are apt to occur from time to time in the lower reaches of the valleys of large rivers, such as the Mississippi, the Indus or the Hoang-ho. It was probably not so extensive, or even so destructive, as the great Mississippi flood of a few years ago, or the great inundation of the

Hoang-ho in China, which is said to have been rectified by Yu about 2260 B.C. Unless The Flood, that deposited the clay at Ur, was greater than that which laid down stratum D at Kish, the river did not rise more than twenty feet, or extend very far on either side of its normal channel.

Early in May 1929 the Tigris rose abnormally, and made many breaches in its banks; this had happened before during the winter of 1925-6. In May 1929 it was followed, at an interval of less than a fortnight, by an unusual rise in the Euphrates, and by May 19th the plain of Mesopotamia was a vast inland sea, extending to the horizon as far as the eye could see from east to west. Out of this the railway line, which is slightly raised above the level of the desert, stood up in bold relief. It is clear from this that floods of considerable magnitude are no uncommon features in the land between the rivers.

It is not, therefore, surprising that there should have been a flood about 4200 B.C., and that this should have wiped out a population, living in reed huts by the river's margin. What is really surprising is that these people had been living unscathed on such sites, at Kish at any rate for a period of eight hundred years. During the following seven centuries, from 4200 to 3500 B.C. or later, there occurred at least three floods that have left behind them traces at Kish, and there may have been others of less extent. If in later times there were fewer, it was probably because the Sumerians had embanked the river sides to restrain their waters. How are we to account for the absence of disastrous inundations between 5000 and 4200 B.C.? The only explanation that I can offer is that the Armenian snow that caused these floods was at that time less in extent, and that between 4200 and 3500 B.C. this increased in amount. This is a possible solution. If so, the increase in the latter period might have been due to that cold phase known as the Gschnitz, though this is usually dated nearly a thousand years earlier. There are, however, still problems to be solved regarding The Flood.

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INDEX

A-anni-padda, 58, 90
Abram, 35, 38, 75, 83
Abu Rasain, 71
Abu-Sharain, 53, 70, 80, 95
Achilles, 8
Adab, 53, 56
Adam, 33
Æschylus, 3
Africa, 14, 19, 20
Agade, 56
Agamemnon, 8, 9
Ahons, 26
Ahura-Mazda, 23
Akkad, 78
Akshak, 56
Alagar, 52
Alagheuz, 67
Alaparos, 52
Alaric, 11
Albright, W. F., 71
Alexander the Great, 3
Alexander Polyhistor, 36
Alexandria, 4
Alorus, 52
Alulim, 52, 54
Amelon, 52
Amempsinos, 52
America, 14, 26
Ammenon, 52
Andree, R., 14, 71
Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, 8
Anu, 45
Apollodorus, 18
Aquarius, 48
Arad-gin, 52
Arcadia, 19
Argonauts, 3
Aristophanes, 4
Aristotle, 5
Ark, the, 1, 2, 29, 30, 31, 33, 102
Armenia, 37, 67, 113–115
Aryans, 3, 24, 25
Ashteroth, 44
Ashur, 43, 68, 72
Asia, 14, 21, 22, 26, 79
Asia Minor, 6, 9, 42, 67, 72
Assam, 26
Assur-bani-pal, 38, 39, 41
Assyria, 35, 38, 41, 117
Athens, 3
Atreus, 9
Attarissijas, 9
Augustine, St., 11
Authorised Version, 2, 12
Awan, 56

Babel, Tower of, 35
Babylon, 28, 31, 34–38, 52
Babylonia, 22, 47
Badarian Civilisation, 109
Badtibira, 54
Baghdad, 78
Bahnars, 26
Bahrein Island, 79
Balikh, 71
Baluchistan, 72
Balulu, 89
Bannavs, 26
Bapedi, 20
Basra, 34

INDEX

Basutos, 20
Bender Bushire, 70, 110
Bengal, 26
Bergelmir, 15
Berosus, 33, 36, 38, 41, 47, 52, 80, 91
Bhils, 25
Bir-Hafar, 34
Boghaz Keui, 42, 43
Boklen, E., 14
Bor, 15
Brunton, G., 109
Buckland, Dr., 12
Buddhism, 24
Bundahis, 23
Burma, 26
Buttmann, P., 14

Cairo, 88
Cambodia, 26
Cambridge, 6
Canaan, 34
Cappadocia, 68
Carisbrooke, 8
Caucasus mountains, 79
Childe, V. Gordon, 117
China, 22, 23, 115
Cochin China, 26
Congo, 20
Constantine, 11
Constantinople, 5, 6
Copais, Lake, 19
Copper, 65, 74, 101, 110
Corinth, Isthmus of, 18
Creation, the, 35, 40, 50, 51
Crete, 34
Cronos, 37
Cyprus, 72
Cyrus, 62, 63

Daily Telegraph, 41, 98, 114
Damghan, 73
Daonos, 52
Dardanus, 19
Darius, 19
Deucalion, 18, 19, 22, 76
Dilmun, 79
Dis, 7
Dog, 65
Dörpfeld, W., 9
Dove, 30–33, 40, 46
Dumuzi-sib, 52, 54
Dwyfach, 15
Dwyfan, 15

Ea, 45, 46, 80
Eabani, 47
East Indies, 26
Egypt, 9, 19-21, 34, 35, 72, 88, 109
Elam, 53, 78, 79, 82, 86, 87, 110
Elburz mountains, 79
Ellasar, 52
Elohim, 31
Elulu, 89
England, 6
Enkidu, 44, 45, 47, 48
Enlil, 45, 46
Enlil-bani, 50
Enmenduranna, 52, 54
Enmengalanna, 52, 54
Enmenluanna, 52, 54
Ennugi, 45
Ensibzianna, 52, 54
Epimetheus, 18
Erasmus, 6
Erech, 44, 47, 55, 56, 59, 80, 85, 89, 90, 106, 108, 112
Eridu, 52–54, 70, 110
Euedorachos, 52
Euhemerus, 4
Euphrates, 33, 35, 45, 53, 62, 71, 96, 100, 113–115
Euripides, 3, 4
Europe, 5–7, 11, 14, 39
Eusebius, 36
Evans, Sir Arthur, 9
Ezra, 10

Fara, 68, 72
Fars, 73

Field, H., 98, 109
Finns, 17
Flax, 65
Fleure, H. J., 118
Fotheringham, J. H., 117
France, 5, 6
Frankfort, H., 66, 67, 71–73, 117
Frazer, Sir James, 14, 19, 20, 27, 28, 75, 117
Frederick II, 5

Ganges, 24
Ga-ur, 102
Gautier, M., 68
Genesis, Book of, 1, 3, 10, 11, 15, 28, 29, 32, 36, 41, 75, 95
Georgius Syncellus, 36
Gerland, G., 14
Gilgamesh, 41, 43–45, 47, 48, 51, 95, 117
Gipsies, 16, 25
Grain, 65
Great Man, 17
Great Woman, 17
Greece, 9, 10, 18, 19
Greek mythology, 3–7, 9, 10, 12, 18, 27
Gschnitz, 114, 116
Guinea, 20
Gutium, 56

Habur, 52
Hall, H. R., 57, 70, 117
Halys, 42
Hamasi, 56
Hammurabi, 35, 98, 103
Haran, 35
Harappa, 25
Harrison, Jane, 7, 8
Hasisadra's Adventure, 14, 48
Hathor, 21
Hebrews, 21, 22, 31, 33, 34
Hellenicus, 18
Hellenistic Age, 4
Hercules, 43
Hermes, 18
Herodotus, 19
Herzfeld, E., 73, 109
Hesiod, 3
Hexateuch, 28
Highland Civilisation, 72–74, 80, 101, 109, 110
Hippo, 11
Hittites, 34, 42, 68
Hoang Ho, 22, 114, 115
Hoes, 65
Homer, 3, 4, 7
Hos, 26
Howarth, Sir Henry, 14
Hrozny, F., 9
Humbaba, 44
Hursagkalama, 98
Huxley, T., 14, 48

Ice Age, 24
Iceland, 15
India, 3, 25
Indus, 24, 25, 114
Iranian plateau, 62, 72–74, 80, 109
Ishtar, 8, 44
Isin, 50, 51, 56
Israel, 28
Italy, 5, 6, 18
Izdubar, 41, 43, 47

Jacob, 35
Jahvistic Document, 28, 29, 31–33, 45
Jehovah, 28
Jemdet Nasr, 59, 71, 72, 79, 82, 85, 100, 101, 110, 111, 117
Jerome, St., 11
Jerusalem, 10, 28, 29
Jews, 5, 10, 31, 33, 38
Josiah, 29
Judah, 28, 31, 34
Julius Africanus, 36

Kalaat Sherkat, 71
Kamars, 25

Kamchadales, 22
Karens, 26
Kashmir, 26, 27
Kassites, 34
Kerkha, 53, 62, 63, 109
Kerkûk, 71
Khazneh Tepeh, 71
Kidunnu-sakinkin, 52
Kish, 53, 55, 56, 59, 60, 72, 76–80, 82, 85–87, 89, 90, 95, 97, 98, 100–113, 115
Knossos, 9
Kouyunjik, 38, 43

Lagash, 53, 93, 100, 104
Lampre, M., 68
Langdon, S., 51, 54, 60, 71, 78, 82, 100–102, 104, 106–108, 110, 112, 117
Larak, 52–54
Larka Kols, 26
Larsa, 35, 52, 53, 91
Layard, Sir Austin, 12, 38
Legrain, A. H., 50
Lempriere, J., 6
Lenormant, F., 14
Lepchas, 26
Linen, 65
Lithuania, 15, 16
Llion, lake of, 15
Lolos, 22
Lowland Civilisation, 72–74, 82, 101, 110
Lucian, 4

Maer, 56
Mahabharata, 24
Malay peninsula, 22, 26
Manu, 24, 76
Marco Polo, 23
Marshall, Sir John, 25
Megalaros, 52
Mes-anni-padda, 56, 58, 59, 77, 83–93, 100, 104–107, 112
Mes-kalam-dug, 85, 87, 90, 92, 112
Meskem-Nannar, 89
Methusaleh, 77
Micronesia, 26
Minos, 9
Mississippi, 27, 114
Mongols, 22
Montelius, O., 71
Moors, 5
Morgan, J. de, 63, 71
Moses, 2, 28
Mosul, 38
Mycenæ, 8
Myths, Chthonic, 7; Sun, 7; Zodiacal, 7, 48

Nehemiah, 10
Neo-Platonists, 4
Nile, 20, 71
Nin-Dumu-Nin, 83
Nineveh, 38, 43
Ninili, 45
Nin-khursag, 58, 94
Nippur, 50, 51, 53, 55, 56, 58, 75, 91
Nisir, 40, 46
Noah, 1, 11, 15, 18, 26, 28–31, 33, 102, 111
Numi-tarom, 17

Oannes, 80, 81
Obsidian, 67
Odin, 15
Old Testament, 10, 28, 29, 117
Olive leaf, 30
Opartes, 52
Orchomenos, 8, 19
Oxford, 51

Pacific Islands, 14, 26
Painted pottery, 60, 63, 64, 66–70, 72, 73, 80, 82, 95, 97, 101, 102, 111.
Palestine, 72

INDEX

Pandora, 18
Pantibiblos, 52
Paris, 66
Parnassus, 18
Parsees, 23
Peneüs, 19
Persephone, 7
Persepolis, 73
Perseus, 9
Persia, 73, 74
Persian Empire, 62
Persian Gulf, 25, 34, 53, 62, 70, 78–80, 97, 100, 110
Persians, 23, 25
Petrie, Sir Flinders, 20
Pézard, M., 70
Pharaoh, 9
Philistines, 34
Phthia, 18
Pictographic script, 59, 60, 76, 78, 110, 117
Pindār, 3, 18
Pisistratus, 3
Poebel, A., 50
Polynesians, 26
Pottier, M., 71
Pramzimas, 16
Priestly Code, 28, 31–33
Prometheus, 18
Prydain, 15
Puranas, 24
Puzur-Amurri, 46
Pyrrha, 18, 19

Querns, 65, 70

Raipur District, 25
Raven, 30, 32, 46
Rawlinson, Sir Henry, 39
Re, 21
Red Sea, 34
Rhys, Sir John, 15
Rig-Veda, 24
Rim-Sin, 35
Roman Empire, 4, 11, 88
Rome, 11, 31

Salerno, 5, 6
Santals, 26
Sargon, 98
Satapatha Brahmana, 24
Savoy, 17
Schliemann, H., 8, 9
Scorpions, 48
Seistan, 72
Sekhmet, 21
Sennacherib, 38
Seti I, 20
Shamash, 46
Shubad, 85, 90, 112
Shu King, 22
Shuruppak, 45, 52–54, 68, 95, 111
Shushan, 62
Shyok, 114
Sickles, 65
Sikkim, 26
Singphos, 26
Sin-liqi-unnini, 43
Sin-Magir, 51
Sippar, 37, 38, 52–54
Smith, George, 39, 40–43, 45
Smith, G. Elliot, 20, 21
Smith, Sidney, 93, 117
Snorri Sturluson, 15
Socrates, 4
Sollas, W. J., 98, 100–102, 114
Solomon, 28
Sophocles, 3
Spain, 5
Stein, Sir Aurel, 22
Stuff, 8
Susa, 53, 57, 62–68, 70–74, 78–80, 82, 95, 110
Syria, 67, 82, 109, 110
Syrian Desert, 35

Tammuz, 8
Tartary, 22
Tasian civilisation, 109

INDEX

Tas mountains, 72
Taurus mountains, 114
Teheran, 73
Tell al-'Ubaid, 57, 69, 70, 80, 82, 90, 91, 94, 95, 97, 101, 110, 117
Tell-el-Judaidah, 71
Tell-el-Lahm, 71
Tell el 'Obeid (*see* Tell al-'Ubaid)
Tell-es-Semen, 71
Telloh, 93, 100
Tell Zeidan, 71
Tempe, 19
Tepeh Musyan, 53, 68, 70, 80, 82, 110
Thessaly, 18, 19, 26, 76
Thompson, R. Campbell, 44, 70, 117
Tibet, 26
Tigris, 53, 62, 110, 115
Tistar, 23
Transjordania, 35
Transylvania, 16, 25
Troy, 7–9
Tupzah, 55
Turkistan, 76, 79
Turks, 6
Turquoise, 66

Ubara-Tutu, 45
Ubardudu, 52, 54
Ur, 35, 38, 53, 56–60, 70, 75, 77, 83–94, 99–102, 104–108, 110–115, 117
Ural mountains, 17
Ur-Nina, 100, 104
Ur-Shanabi, 45
Usener, H., 14, 16
Uta-Napishtim, 45, 46, 48, 102, 111

Vergil, 5
Visigoths, 11
Voguls, 17

Wadi Armah, 34
Wandu, 16
Watelin, L.-Ch., 98, 100, 107, 112
We, 15
Wejas, 16
Weld-Blundell, H., 51
Weld-Blundell prism, 51, 54, 55, 58, 75, 85, 93, 107
Wight, Isle of, 8
Wihtgar, 8
Wili, 15
Winternitz, M., 14
Wolf, F. A., 7
Woolley, C. L., 12, 57–59, 70, 80, 82–84, 86, 88, 89, 91, 94–97, 99, 102, 104, 106, 107, 110, 111, 113, 117

Xisuthros, 36, 37, 47, 52, 95, 102, 111

Yaveh, 31
Yima, 23, 24
Ymir, 15
Yu, 115
Yunnan, 22

Zagros mountains, 53, 62, 70, 72, 73
Zend-Avesta, 23
Zeus, 18, 19
Ziusuddu, 52
Zoroastrians, 23

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